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FIGHT AGAINST THE EMPTY CRADLE: NAZI PRONATAL
POLICIES AND THE SS-FUHRERKORPS

Herbert F. Ziegler(*)

Abstract: During the early decades of the twentieth century, Germany, like most western European nations, faced fertility levels at which its population was unable to replace itself. Upon assuming power in 1933 the National Socialist regime began almost immediately to implement pronatalist measures in an effort to halt and reverse this trend. At the forefront of the battle against the declining birthrate stood Heinrich Himmler, the leader of the SS, who attempted to make his officer corps into an example of fecundity worthy of emulation by the entire German nation. But neither material incentives, coercion, a barrage of indoctrination and propaganda, nor special pronatal institutional devices such as the Lebensborn succeeded in stimulating fertility. In the final analysis even within the SS, the vanguard of National Socialism, it proved impossible to increase the number of births significantly - Germans and SS-Führer alike continued to prefer small families. Thus the secular decline in German fertility, which had begun during the latter part of the nineteenth century, was not checked during the National Socialist era, pronatalist measures notwithstanding.

The increasing industrialization and urbanization of Western European nations during the latter part of the nineteenth century was accompanied by concomitant demographic transformations, which were characterized by a shift from high birth and death rates to substantially lower ones. This demographic transitional) as it is often labeled, took anywhere from fifty years to more than a century, and varied with the rate of social and economic development of individual countries. The resultant secular decline in overall fertility progressed to the extent that some nations felt genuinely threatened by their future demographic prospects.(2) By the 1930s, fertility levels in much of Europe had reached the mark at which populations were unable to replace themselves, notwithstanding considerably decreased mortality levels.(3) On a national level, between unification in 1871 and the early 1930's, overall fertility in Germany had declined by some sixty percent, making it, with the sole exception of Austria, the lowest in Europe.(4)

The public discussion of the population decline(5) was still being pursued when the Nazis assumed power and began, almost immediately, to implement new policies or amplify existing ones designed to increase Germany's birthrate.(6) Without a hint of irony or self-doubt, the leaders of the Third Reich lamented that Germany was at once a 'sterbendes Volk' as well as a 'Volk ohne Raum'(7) in need of 'Lebensraum'. This rather apparent contradiction did not discourage the drive for more people. A case in point was the

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'Reichsführer-SS', Heinrich Himmler, who shared the apprehensions regarding the future of the race.(8) Despite the fact that Himmler was concerned frequently more with the quality(q) rather than quantity of offspring, he intended to take up the fight against the empty cradle as part of his battle for the regeneration of the "new Germany".(10) Because he feared the adverse reaction of individuals and institutions, especially on part of the churches, Himmler tried to avoid implementation of pronatalist policies, which could be construed as social experimentation. Although he did not always succeed at this, most of the more aggressive devices designed to increase the birth rate were applied only within the microcosm of a captive audience, the SS. In the matter of procreation the Black Order was to serve as an example for the entire nation, and to reeducate the common 'Volksgenossen' away from existing bourgeois morality which inhibited population growth. The aim of the following, then, is to trace Himmler's obsession for increasing births, particularly those within the 'SS-Führerkorps', to document specific pronatalist measures that he considered and introduced, and to show why, in the final analysis, these measures failed.

On January 15th and 16th, 1926, Heinrich Himmler, we are told, read 'Der Völker Vergehen und Werden. Grundlagen einer allgemeinen Völkerpolitik' by Professor Dr. A. Thomsen. This book, which he had received from Gregor Strasser, apparently made a deep and lasting impression on him. "It is dreadful," he noted in his reading list, that in Germany today women no longer want to be mothers. "God grant us that one day this will change".(11) Twelve years later, Himmler voiced the same concern even more urgently at the occasion of a meeting of high-ranking SS leaders. "A people who have many children", he insisted, "have the prospect of world power and world rule, whereas a people with few children have only a death certificate."(12)

As telling as these remarks may be, they are not intended to suggest that Himmler's interest in procreation stemmed solely from reading one book. On the contrary, his obsession with demographic growth was much more broadly based, and related directly to the function and purpose of the organization that he headed. As Hitler's executive power, the SS was charged not only with securing the New Order but also with siring it.(13) The task of security was linked to a creative mission, which went beyond the security of the German Volk and had as its ultimate and Utopian aim the future Greater Germanic Reich; a Reich characterized by plenty of 'Lebensraum' to be administered by an elite of a new human type. But where was this elite to come from? There were, after all, limits to the recruitment of "racially fit" individuals who could serve in the SS. The answer was as obvious as the question; the Black Order itself must produce the requisite broad base of human material for biological selection.

The 'Reichsführer-SS' thus distinctively wished to communicate to his men that they constituted a fertile group which should multiply without end, and which, by reason, of its fecundity, its vital spirit, and its dynamism, was destined to pass on the superior characteristics of the German race to future generations. Readiness, for an SS man, implied not simply the willingness to sacrifice his own life when needed but, equally important, must include the desire to extend his blood to his children and his children's children. The SS, according to its 'spiritus rector', must become a glorious example for the entire Volk, and the sight of the SS uniform must invoke the image of a healthy flock of children. SS-Führer, in particular, must make it their duty to procreate, for they hold a special position of trust which exceeds even that of the regular membership.(14)

By the standards of the SS, therefore, as long as one was capable of siring children, it was considered unnatural to limit the number of births for selfish personal reasons. The sole purpose of marriage was the begetting and educating of numerous racially valuable children.(15) If appropriate standards of procreation were lacking one needed to look no further than nature itself, where could be found a standard worth emulating. "Yes, in the animal kingdom should we look for a model. The bird which strives for the preservation of the species does not know a one-child family and a two-child system."(16) In his usual illuminating and didactic fashion, Himmler liked to make reference to Germany's musical heritage to emphasize the dangers of birth control. "What would have happened", he asked rhetorically, "if Mrs. Bach after her twelfth child would have said enough is enough? What would have been the result if Mrs. Wagner would have had only five children?"(17) The answer, of course, begs the question.

Accordingly, the SS ideal of a healthy marriage was initially defined as comprising a 'Vier-Kindersystem'; two children to replace their parents, one child to cover the potential loss of one of the two offspring, and one child for the 'Nichtskönnner'. A few years later, the demand was raised to four sons. Better yet, in the best of all possible worlds the wife of an SS man would have a child every year.(18) But how to accomplish these aims? How, indeed, does one motivate a group of men to sire children in large numbers? The response to this question is that Himmler and his lieutenants had a number of means available, all designed to encourage their men to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth with good Aryans. To further the 'Kinderreichtum' within his organization, Himmler could draw on a variety of pronatalist measures, some of which were applicable to all German citizens while others were limited to members of the SS only.

The first measures aimed at increasing the birth rate - measures that applied equally to all German citizens, including 'SS-Führer' - pertained to the restriction of birth control and a stepped up fight against abortion. New legislative means for the suppression of abortions were introduced in 1933, when paragraph 219 and 220 of the criminal code, abrogated in 1926, were reintroduced.(19) But this was only the beginning. In 1936 Heinrich Himmler established the Reich's Central Agency for the Struggle Against Homosexuality and Abortion and, six years later, new antiabortion legislation even demanded the death penalty "in extreme cases".(20) The only abortions that were approved were the ones involving so-called hereditary unhealthy children, who were defined by the notorious Law for the Prevention of Hereditably Diseased Offspring of 14 July 1933(21), and the ones involving Jewish children. In both cases it was thought that such abortions could only benefit the German people.(22) As an adjunct to the battle against abortions, Himmler's Police Ordinance of 1943 relating to "methods, materials, and instruments for the prevention and interruption of pregnancy", severely limited access to contraceptives. Police closed birth control centers and the display and advertisement of contraceptives were controlled under existing laws.(23)

The first positive, and perhaps most important device, for increasing births was the enactment of the Law for the Promotion of Marriages, contained in section V of the Law for the Reduction of Unemployment.(24) At first these laws were only part of a larger legislation for reducing unemployment, that is, reducing male unemployment, by shifting women from paid employment into positions that conformed to their "natural" and domestic duties as homemaker and mother. But when unemployment was reduced to such levels that actual labor shortages appeared(25), the Nazis were forced to reverse their back-to-home crusade and the primary purpose of this law from this point on was

simply to promote marriages. The law was to establish special conditions, in the form of loans,(26) to encourage marriage among those young people who were postponing it for economic reasons. Rather than cash payments, the loans provided coupons which could be exchanged for household equipment and furniture at retail stores.(27) An incentive to bear children was given by cancelling a quarter of the initial loan with the birth of each child(28), thus providing that the birth of four children would liquidate the entire loan. Repayments from the marriage loans were, in turn, used to provide special grants to families with dependent children.(29)

In addition to the marriage loan scheme, civil servants and employees of public administrations of the 'Reich', 'Länder', and 'Gemeinden' received monthly child allowances according to the number of children per family. Other, less significant governmental measures included reductions in railway fares, preferential treatment in employment allocation, and various acts providing cheap housing.(30) Lastly, the changes in income tax(31), capital gains tax(32), inheritance tax(33), and 'Bürgersteuer'(34), to the advantage of large families should be noted. Without going into excessive detail, it should suffice to point out that the tax changes were designed to aid married couples with children and penalize those without. In a similar fashion, divorce laws also emphasized fertility.(35) A husband could declare his wife incapable of bearing children even if she had given birth in previous years. Courts could hand down divorce decrees solely on the grounds that the husband considered his wife sterile.(36)

Because they were relatively inexpensive, the propaganda aspects of pronatalist incentives were particularly popular with the regime. A veritable motherhood cult was set in motion, and the first symbols of the nation's esteem for mothers began to appear.(37) Annually on August 12 - the birthday of Hitler's mother - prolific women were awarded the Honor Cross of the German Mother in three classes: bronze for more than four children, silver for more than six, and gold for more than eight.(38) By August of 1939, some three million fecund women had been the recipients of this prestigious award, which was also known to the general public as "rabbit decoration".(39) Members of the Nazi youth organizations were dutybound to salute wearers of the Mother's Cross.(40) Heinrich Himmler was ecstatic about these developments and confided to his masseur that "the Mother's Cross is the best of all; one day it'll be the greatest honor in Greater Germany. Sentries will have to present arms to a woman with the Mothers' Cross in gold; she will have a right to an audience with the Führer, and she'll enjoy boundless honor throughout the land."(41) In addition to the Cross, mothers with three or more children under the age of ten could carry on Honor Card(42), which entitled them to preferential treatment in shops and offices. Highly fertile women received a somewhat unexpected advantage during the war years - they were eligible to have maids from Poland and the Ukraine helping them with household chores, all courtesy of the 'Reichsführer-SS'.(43) Ultimately, the prolific German mother was to occupy the same honored place in the community as the front line soldier: for she, too, had her battlefield, the battle being that of the birth rate.(44)

In order to redress the population imbalance Himmler also developed devices that were specific to the SS, the best known of which is the institution called 'Lebensborn e.V.' ("well of life")-(45) The purpose of this organization was to foster fecundity within the SS by offering welfare assistance to SS families having many children who were racially valuable. However, assistance was not limited to SS families, and theoretically any expectant mother was eligible to take advantage of 'Lebensborn's' maternity and child-care facilities.(46) Membership in 'Lebensborn', which was founded 12 Decem-

ber 1935, was voluntary except for full-time SS-Führer who paid monthly fees based on a sliding scale which depended on their age, marital status, and income.(47) During its nine year existence 'Lebensborn' had 17,000 members, and supervised 15 homes for expectant mothers throughout Germany in which approximately 12,000 children were born, over half of whom were illegitimate.(48) In addition to married women, single women also could turn to these homes for delivery of their children as long as they and their partners met the racial standards of the SS, and could produce eugenically valuable offspring.(49) The acceptance of unwed mothers was designed to discourage abortion by women who felt threatened by the stigma and abuse attached to bearing illegitimate children. To protect the identity of mother and child, the births of illegitimate children were not even registered with local authorities. After delivery there existed the possibility of leaving the children in a 'Lebensborn' institution or having them adopted. To avoid discrimination against unwed mothers within Lebensborn homes, all women were addressed as 'Frau' or called by first name only.(50)

Probably unknown to them, women who gave birth in 'Lebensborn' homes also provided fertility related data to Himmler, who was especially interested in evaluating information concerning the onset of first menses and the maximum age at which a woman could conceive.(51) Towards the end of the Third Reich, Himmler seemed to have discovered the potentially best time for conception. Writing to 'SS-Oberführer' Professor Dr.Wüst in 1944, he related to him the story of an unwed woman who had given birth in 1930 after conceiving under somewhat unusual circumstances. The girl, along with the entire village, had been taken by her father to the site of a prehistoric grave. With the girl on top of the grave and the villagers forming a circle around her, though respectfully facing away, the lucky girl was impregnated by a previously chosen volunteer. The moral of the story was, of course, that this custom assured the perpetuation of good blood. Beyond that, it was of profound interest that all this took place under the new moon, for this was apparently the most auspicious time for conception.(52)

However bizarre the quest for children was, Himmler insisted that it had to be the result of a natural act of conception, and never the result of artificial insemination schemes.(53) In later years, prompted by the number of male war casualties, Himmler supposedly considered extending the pre and postnatal care offered by 'Lebensborn' to include actual conception assistance.(54)

Though he probably gave the matter serious thought, there is no evidence that the SS ever sponsored sexual liaisons.(55) The 'Reichsführer-SS' probably could not yet afford to deal with the negative repercussions that such policy would generate once this sort of experiment became public. Presumably, the ill effects of Himmler's order for the SS and Police of 28 October 1939, which demanded that "each SS man before going into the field must sire a child", had not been forgotten.(56) This order had caused considerable consternation among the public, but especially among members of the 'Wehrmacht'. On that occasion, Himmler was forced to clarify his order, stressing that it did not imply that SS men with fertility designs on their minds should approach for instance, women whose husbands were fighting on the front.(57)

But Himmler was not to be discouraged in his drive to increase the birth rate, especially when his own men were involved. For example, he implored his 'Führer' to give timely furloughs to those men who had wives of child-bearing age so that the women could conceive as often as possible. To facilitate matters even more, Himmler on occasion arranged for proper hotel

accommodations at SS expense.(58) On August 15, 1942, the 'Reichsführer' released an order aimed at "the last sons", under which young men were sent briefly home from the front in order to sire children.(59) The rationale behind this was that good blood should not die unless it had been perpetuated first, and considering the not unlikely possibility of a soldier being killed at the front, this seemed to be a sensible solution. The same rationale led to another recommendation directed especially at SS commanders. In the past, it had been common practice to spare or look after fathers by sending childless men on those combat missions which were particularly dangerous, and the SS now demanded an end to this practice.(60) As if this were not enough, Himmler conceived of yet another design: the introduction of bigamous marriages for war heroes. He anticipated that some day perhaps this institution could replace the standard monogamous marriage.(61)

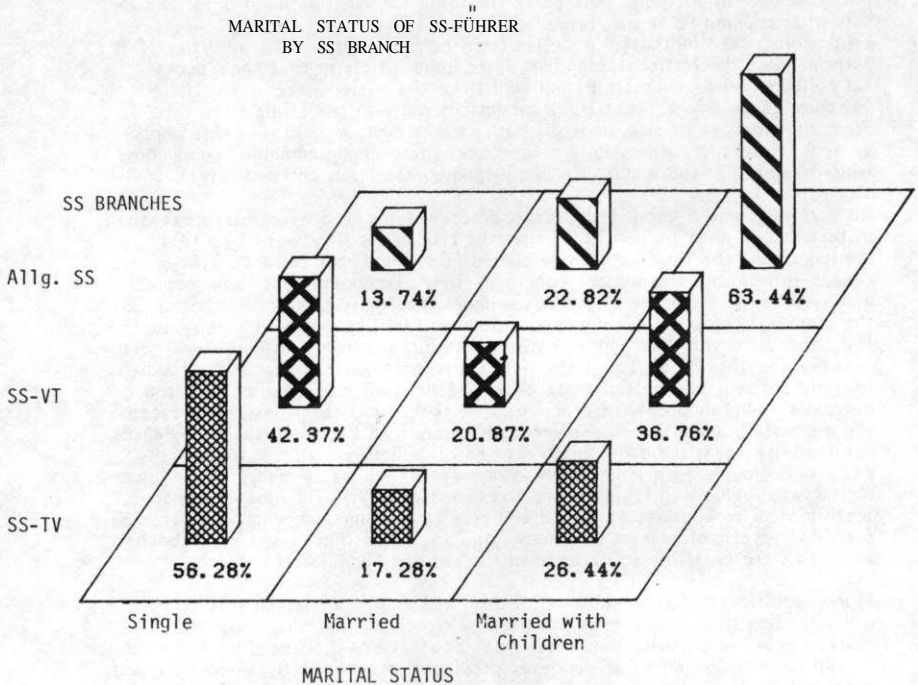
Marital fertility seems to have played an increasingly important role with respect to advancement in the 'SS-Führerkorps'. Evidence gleaned from SS personnel records makes it appear that Himmler and his representatives took the matter of procreation seriously when deciding on recommendations for promotion. There are instances when these recommendations were flatly rejected if the individual in question had a childless marriage(62), and these rejections had an impact on ambitious and career oriented SS men. 'SS-Untersturmführer' Konrad Füll, for example, after trying to impregnate his wife for five months without success, proceeded to file for a divorce. His justification was simple: the marriage was not only unfulfilling in a personal sense but, above all, was worthless to the state. Nor was there any question to who was at fault because Füll had managed to produce a child previous to this marriage.(63) Others took a different approach. After five years of a childless marriage, 'SS-Hauptsturmführer' Karl Fichtner, with the express consent of his wife, simply sired a child with a female acquaintance.(64) In spite of the individual efforts involved, these and similar attempts to increase the birth rate proved to be statistically insignificant.

Much to Himmler's disappointment, not even the most modest of his expectations were met by his SS, including its leadership. By 1939, despite 'Lebensborn' and other pronatalist devices, the much vaunted 'Vier-Kindersystem' was far from being realized and future prospects seemed gloomy. Official SS statistics revealed that existing marriages in December 1938 among the SS leadership resulted on the average in only 15 children, a figure well below replacement levels. When the total number of children is averaged for all 'Führer', regardless of marital status, the figure dips to 1.1 children. Nor do age specific figures, that is, the number of children for each married individual between the age of 25 and 45, provide any more encouraging conclusions. Such calculations indicate that there were 1.3 children for each married 'Führer' or, disregarding marital status, .97 children per 'Führer'.(65) Data, based on a sample of the three main SS branches(66), demonstrates the demise of Himmler's efforts more clearly.

Average Number of Children for SS-Führer and SS-Führer Marriages By SS Branch

SS Branch	SS-Führer		SS-Führer Marriage	
	1939	1945	1939	1945
SS-TV	.45	1.0	1.0	1.3
SS-VT	.67	1.2	1.3	1.5
Allg^SS	1.4	1.1	1.9	2.0

The 'SS-Führerkorps' had a high proportion of married people and there was even a trend for the proportion of married individuals to increase slightly. Out of a total of 13,746 'Führer' in December 1938, some 10,625 or 77.3 percent were married. This, compared to 80.5 percent married men in the general population between the ages 20 and 45, and might have given rise to some optimism since a high proportion of marriages, especially young ones, is usually associated with high levels of fertility.(67) However, an examination of SS nuptiality patterns makes it clear that changes in marriage patterns could not have constituted the decline in fertility Himmler was trying to combat.(68)



As encouraging as these figures might appear at first glance, they only underlined the lack of births within the leadership of the SS. Since illegitimate fertility by 1938 (N=67) accounted for less than one percent of all births(69), it was only too apparent that the low levels of fertility within the leadership of the SS were largely the result of reduced children within marriage. As the charts below clearly indicate, a relatively high proportion of marriages were without any children at all. And of those marriages that had children, roughly one half produced only one child.

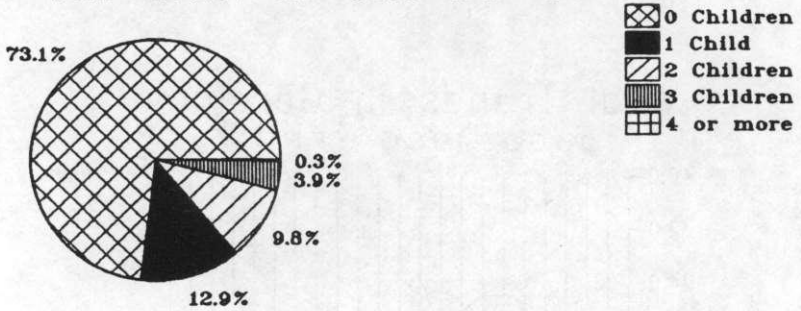
(see figure 2 next page)

Heinrich Himmler's efforts to promote increased childbearing failed because the 'SS-Führerkorps' was subject of the same longterm demographic trends in fertility which affected Germany as well as most of the industrialized countries of Central, Western, and Northern Europe. The notion of returning fertility rates to levels which existed during the prolific decades of the latter 19th century was based on illusion and was therefore hopeless from the beginning(70); as in other spheres, he and the National Socialists were trying to combat the sweeping and unyielding forces of social and demographic change. Admittedly, the years following the Nazi assumption of power saw what seemed to be an abrupt reversal of the fertility decline, when the crude birth rate increased mostly from 14.7 in 1933 to 20.4 in 1939. Not surprisingly, the National Socialists were quick to claim that their pronatal policies and a general spiritual rebirth of the nation were responsible for this "happy event," that is, a modest increase in the crude birth rate from 14.7 in 1933 to 20.4 in 1939. Others, however, argued that this improvement in fertility was simply a function of improved economic conditions, which resulted in the making up of postponed marriages and births.(71)

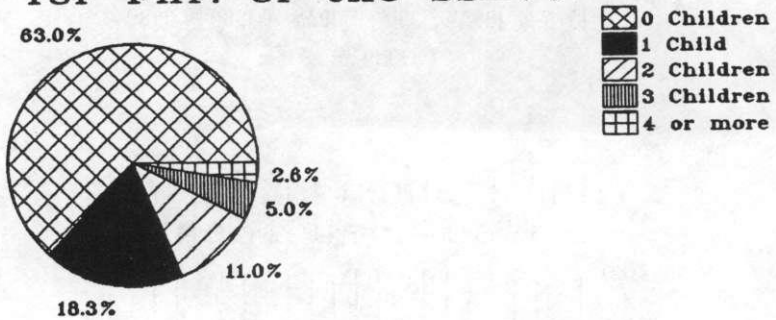
Be that as it may, even if the Nazis deserve some credit for this increase in fertility, it must be concluded that the rise in fertility was of no real consequence in the long run if it is placed into the proper context. The most recent works on the subject concur in their assessment that any revival achieved in the birthrate in the 1930s under the Nazis cannot be considered the reversal of a secular decline in German fertility.(72) Ever since the last decade of the nineteenth century, the birth rate in Germany had been steadily decreasing. Although the death rate continued to abate as well, by the mid 1920s it had begun to stabilize at levels not much higher than those currently found in the two Germanies. The result was that the growth rate of the population began to slow down as the margin of excess births over deaths declined. By 1933, the crude birth rate had reached its nadir of 14.7 births per 1000 people. Only during the years 1917-1918 was a marginally lower birth rate evidenced (13.9 and 14.3 respectively).^ The increases in fertility during the late 1930s were therefore only modest when compared to fertility levels of previous decades, and any gains that may have been realized were certainly squandered in the ensuing Second World War.

More significantly yet, the overall drop in fertility as demonstrated by postwar fertility indices was far from being over. Although there were marked peaks in fertility in both Germanies after 1945, these were followed by an uneven decline to levels never previously recorded. Between 1971 and 1983, the Federal Republic of Germany registered a negative margin of births over deaths for each year.(74) Demographic developments in the German Democratic Republic were not much different until recently; only since 1979 has the population level there remained nearly stationary.(75) These developments leave no doubt then that any successes in revitalizing fertility were temporary at best.

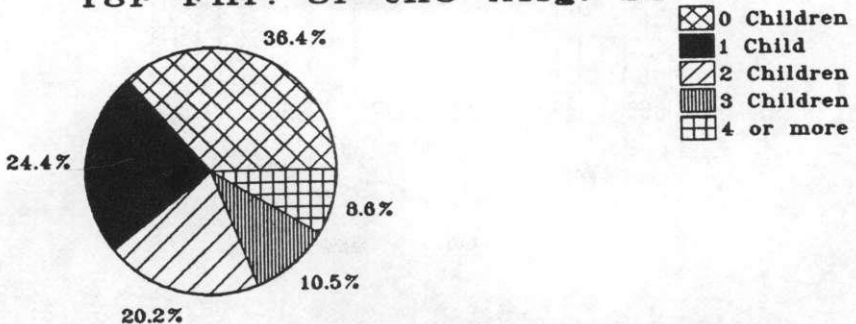
Number of Children for Fhr. of the SS-TV



Number of Children for Fhr. of the SS-VT



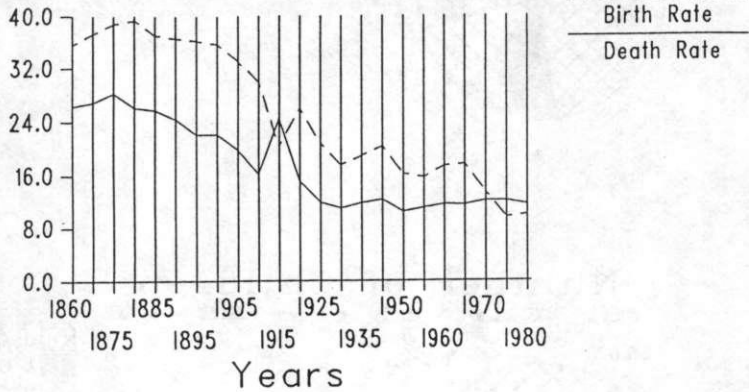
Number of Children for Fhr. of the Allg. SS



FIGURES 3 and 4:

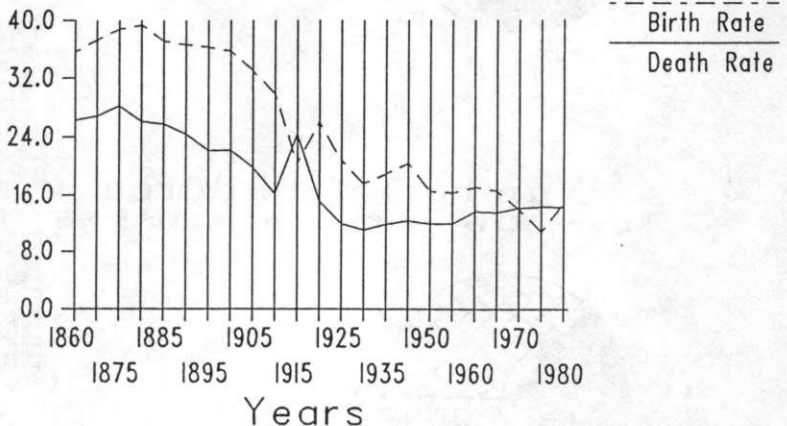
Birth & Death Rates
Per 1,000 Pop.

Vital Trends in Germany 1860-1980 (FRG)



Birth & Death Rates
Per 1,000 Pop.

Vital Trends in Germany 1860-1980 (GDR)



What Himmler and other Nazis either did not know, or at least failed to acknowledge, was that "fertility is rooted in the convergence of a series of social revolutions that have changed the structure and functions of the family ..., making it all but impossible to pinpoint specific interventions that might succeed in stimulating fertility."(76) The secular decline as well as short-term fluctuations in German fertility were indicative of a population which had fertility under substantial control and was unwilling to alter its reproductive preferences. Since the nineteenth century decisions regarding procreation had been determined by certain aspects of the social changes which accompanied Germans industrial development. The most notable features of this social transformation included the changing roles and aspirations of women, the availability of contraceptive techniques, personal and social acceptability of these techniques, and above all, a new pattern of personal choices concerning family size and the timing of births.(77)

Neither material incentives, coercion, nor political indoctrination on part of the Nazis could change the complex factors which motivated men and women to limit their family size, not even within the leadership of the vanguard of National Socialism. It was the hallmark of Himmler's Black Order and the Third Reich that successes were limited to negative aspects of demographic policy while other components remained the subject of propaganda and wishful thinking.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 This is a simple model, which links demographic changes to social and economic developments, and describes general European-wide population trends rather than the experience of individual nations. The demographic transition is usually thought of as encompassing four phases of demographic development. The early phase is characterized by (preindustrial) high birth and death rates. Because the birth rate tends to be somewhat higher than the death rate, the population grows slowly. A falling death rate along with a high birth rate marks the second phase. The margin of births over deaths produces an increase in population growth, which is often spectacular in its magnitude. Population growth abates during the third phase because the birth rate declines, adjusting itself to the relatively low levels of the death rate. Low birth and death rates signal the onset of the last phase. During this time the death rate tends to be stable while the birth rate is still subject to short term fluctuations. The result is that population growth rates vary over periods of five to ten years. Maurice Kirk, *Demographic and Social Change in Europe, 1975-2000*, Liverpool 1981, 2-3
- 2 Reduced levels of fertility and declining rates of population growth pose formidable problems for societies and their governments. This holds true for the present as much as it did during the early part of the century. See, for example, Jean Bourgeois-Pichat, "Recent Demographic Change in Europa: An Assessment", *Population and Development Review* 7 (March 1981), 19-42 and C. Alison McIntosh, *Population Policy in Western Europe. Responses to Low Fertility in France, Sweden, and West-Germany*, Armonk, N.Y. and London 1983. The social policy implications of declining and aging populations are discussed in David E.C. Eversley, "Welfare", in: *Population Decline in Europe*, ed., Council of Europe, London 1978, 115-142.
- 3 Replacement is defined as a fertility level which, in association with prevailing mortality rates, permits the exact replacement of each generation. Hence, if continued in the long term, such fertility levels result

- in net reproduction rates of i.o and zero population growth. See McIntosh, Population Policy, Appendix A.
- 4 The German experience is exhaustively dealt with by John E. Knodel, *The Decline of Fertility in Germany, 1871-1939*, Princeton, N.J., 1977.
 - 5 Although economic concerns were often voiced, see John Maynard Keynes, "Some Economic Consequences of a Declining Population", *Eugenics Review* 29 (April 1937), 14; and Gunnar Myrdal, *Population: A Problem for Democracy*, Cambridge, Mass. 1940, the fertility decline frequently evoked more basic anxieties such as the fear of aging societies without elan, and the spectre of spaces filled by peoples more prolific but of alien extraction. Indeed, to many the lack of births signified nothing less than the chant de cygne of Western civilization. Cf. Alfred Sauvy, *L'Europe et sa Population*, Paris 1953 and *La Montée des Jeunes*, Paris 1959. In Germany Friedrich Burgdörfer, *Volksdeutsche Zukunft, eine biologisch-statistische Betrachtung der gesamtdeutschen Bevölkerungsfrage*, Berlin 1938, 10 summarized demographic prospects by way of a metaphor: "Unser Volk gleicht immer noch einer überalterten Flotte, für deren Ersatz nicht genügende Neubauten auf den Stapel gelegt werden". See also by the same author, *Geburtenschwund, die Kulturkrankheit Europas und ihre Überwindung in Deutschland*, Heidelberg 1942, *Volk ohne Jugend - Geburtenschwund und Überalterung des deutschen Volkskörpers*, Berlin 1932, and *Aufbau und Bewegung der Bevölkerung. Ein Führer durch die deutsche Bevölkerungsstatistik und Bevölkerungspolitik*, Leipzig 1935. Also of interest is Christopher Tietze, "Germany's Population Movement", *Eugenics Review* 21 (January 1930), 265-269.
 - 6 A very useful summary of NS population policies is still provided by David V. Glass, *Population Policies and Movements in Europe*, London 1967, 1st ed., (1946). Cf. Frank H. Hawkins, "German Policies for increasing Births", *American Journal of Sociology* 42 (March 1937), 630-652, Rudolf Frecks, *German Population Policies*, Berlin 1938, and Brian F. Pendleton, "An Historical Description and Analysis of Pronatalist Policies in Italy, Germany, and Sweden", *Policy Sciences* 9 (1978), 45-70.
 - 7 This concept had been adopted from one of Hans Grimm's books by the same title, Munich 1927. Because *Volk ohne Raum* was an easily remembered phrase, it was adopted quickly by the Nazis as a slogan. It was used also to justify and legitimize Hitler's expansionist designs in Eastern Europe and particularly the Soviet Union.
 - 8 Himmlers concern for the birth rate is reflected in "Entwurf für die Bevölkerungspolitische Schrift an die SS-Führer", 1937, U.S. National Archives Microfilm Publications, Microcopy T-175, Records of the Reich Leader SS and Chief of the German Police, Roll 201, Frames 274207-10. Hereafter cited as T-175/201/2742407-io.
 - 9 The pronatalist policies that were pursued by the Nazi regime in general, and by the SS in particular, were tied to the belief in the ultimate superiority of the Aryan race. Underlying this assumption was the drive to increase the number of Germans of Aryan stock, while it also justified the elimination of the hereditary unfit and racially impure. Himmler's mania for racial purity is only too well known, and is emphasized throughout his speeches and writings. For a typical statement of his views see his *Die SS als antibolschewistische Kampforganisation*, Munich 1936.
 - 10 "Entwurf für die bevölkerungspolitische Schrift an die SS-Führer", 1937, T-175/201/2742410-15.
 - 11 Josef Ackermann, *Heinrich Himmler als Ideologe*, Göttingen, 1970, 126.
 - 12 "Rede des Reichsführer-SS anlässlich der Gruppenführer-Besprechung in Tölz", 18.2.1937, T-175/89/2611828-1906.
 - 13 Joash Meisler, "Himmler's Doctrine of the SS Leadership", *Jahrbuch des Institutes für deutsche Geschichte* 8 (1979), 400. The SS as "Führer eccu-

- tive" is discussed by Hans Buchheim, "Die SS - Das Herrschaftsinstrument", passim, in Hans Buchheim et al., *Anatomie des SS-Staates*, Ötten and Freiburg 1965, 2 vols.
- 14 "Bevölkerungspolitik im SS-Führer Korps, Stand 1.12.1938", T-175/123/649262-263.
 - 15 "Die Ehe im Dienste der Volksgemeinschaft", *Das Schwarze Korps*, 3. April 1935, 10-11.
 - 16 Ackermann, *Ideologe*, 126-127.
 - 17 "Rede des Reichsführer-SS - Junkerschule Tölz", 23.11.1942, T-175/90/2612785.
 - 18 "Bevölkerungspolitik im SS-Führer Korps, Stand 1.12.1938", T-175/123/649262.
 - 19 *Reichsgesetzblatt* (1933) 1:295, hereafter cited as RGB. On the same date eugenic sterilization was legalized, voluntary sterilization was prohibited.
 - 20 Gisela Bock, "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State", in *When Biology Becomes Destiny. Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, New York 1984, 276.
 - 21 RGB (1933) 1:529. This law also permitted for compulsory sterilization of certain categories of people.
 - 22 Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society*, New York 1975, 9.
 - 23 RGB (1941) 1:163, and Hans Harmsen, "Notes on Abortion and Birth Control in Nazi Germany", *Population Studies* 3 (March 1950), 402-405
 - 24 RGB (1933) 1:326-9
 - 25 "Mobilization of Labor Reserves in Germany", *International Labor Review* 38 (November 1939), 599.
 - 27 RG (1933) 1:379.
 - 28 RGB (1933) 1:323 and RGB (1937) 1:2258-1159
 - 28 RGB (1933) 1:...
 - 29 For "einmalige Kinderbeihilfen" see RGB (1935) 1:160, for "laufende Kinderbeihilfen" RGB (1936) 1:252, and RGB (1937) 1:989, "for erweiterte laufende Kinderbeihilfen" RGB (1939) 1:241.
 - 30 RGB (1938) 1:241, 616, 1210
 - 31 RGB (1934) 1:1005, RGB (1938) 1:99, 121, RGB (1939) 1:297.
 - 32 RGB (1934) 1:1052.
 - 33 RGB (1934) 1:1056
 - 34 RGB (1934) 1:1985, RGB (1937) 1:237, RGB (1938) 1:1534-
 - 35 "Zum neuen Ehescheidungsrecht", *Das Schwarze Korps* (21. October 1937), 6.
 - 36 RGB (1938) 1:807-22.
 - 37 The need for a mother cult, especially one that does not differentiate between married or unmarried women, is documented in J. Hale, "Adolf Hitler and the Post-War Birthrate. An unpublished Memorandum", *Journal of Central European Affairs* 17 (July 1957), 172.
 - 38 "Wer erhält das Ehrenkreuz" and "Rudolf Heß verkündet die Stiftung des Ehrenkreuzes der deutschen Mutter", *Völkischer Beobachter* (27. December 1938), 1-2.
 - 39 Clarissa Henry and Marc Hillel, *Lebensborn e.V. Im Namen der Rasse*, Vienna/Hamburg 1975, 42.
 - 40 Stephenson, *Women*, 50.
 - 41 Felix Kersten, *The Kersten Memoirs 1940-1945*, London 1956, 54.
 - 42 "Ehrenkarte für Mütter", *Völkischer Beobachter* (18. November 1934).
 - 43 Henry and Hillel, *Lebensborn*, 43.
 - 44 Max Domarus, *Hitler: Reden und Proklamationen, 1932-45*, Würzburg 1962, 4 vols., 1:531 and "Warum keine Kinder", *Das Schwarze Korps* (22. June 1939).
 - 45 "Satzung des Vereins Lebensborn e.V.", T-175/123/2649280-282. The establishment of Lebensborn and its functions are documented in the SS directive of December 1940 "Die Pflichten des SS-Mannes und SS-Führers", T-175/15/2518681-83. The best treatment of Lebensborn is provided by Larry

- V. Thompson, "Lebensborn and the Eugenics Policy of the Reichsführer-SS", *Central European History* 4 (March 1971), 54-77. Less satisfactory is by Richard Grünberger, "Lebensborn. Hitler's Selective Breeding Establishment", *The Wiener Library Bulletin*, London 16 (Juli 1962), 52-53. See also Henry and Hillel, *Lebensborn*, op. cit.
- 46 Thompson, "Lebensborn", 54, 61.
- 47 "Rede des Reichsführer-SS auf der Tagung der Auslandsorganisationen in Stuttgart, 2.9.1938", T-175/90/2613791.
- 48 Membership in Lebensborn must have been less than popular. According to SS statistics, SS membership comprised some 238,000 men in 1939. At the same time, only 8,000 SS men were members of Lebensborn whose total membership stood at 13,000. "Zwei Jahre Lebensborn-Arbeit, 22.1.1939", T-175/17/252715-0717. See also Cf. Grünberger, "Breeding Establishments", 52-53 and Thompson, "Lebensborn", 75.
- 49 Cf. "Das uneheliche Kind", *Das Schwarze Korps* (9.April 1936), 6.
- 50 "Rede des Reichsführer-SS vor Vertretern der deutschen Justiz in Cochem, 25.5.1944", T-174/93/2613791-3792, 2613805 and "Zwei Jahre Lebensborn-Arbeit, 22.1.1939", T-175/17/252719-0720.
- 51 Ackermann, *Ideologe*, 139. Himmler took considerable personal interest in the administrative details of Lebensborn. Perhaps his obsession with the creation of life provided moral compensation for euthanasia and extermination programs. Thompson, "Lebensborn", 60 and note 16.
- 52 Helmut Heiber, ed. *Reichsführer!... Brief an und von Himmler*, Stuttgart 1968, doc.// 344, 281-282.
- 53 For Himmler's opposition to artificial insemination see his letter to Professor Dr. Heinz Heuseier, Direktor des Instituts für Tierzucht und Züchtungsbiologie, TH Munich, in Heiber, *Reichsführer! doc. #226*, 207-209.
- 54 Kersten, *Memoirs*, 181.
- 55 There is no evidence that Lebensborn sponsored sexual activities of this kind. See Bernd Wegner, "The Aristocracy of National Socialism": The Role of the SS in National Socialist Germany", in H.W. Koch, ed., *Aspects of the Third Reich*, New York 1985, 435 and Thompson "Lebensborn", 70-71.
- 56 "Der Reichsführer-SS und Chef der deutschen Polizei, SS-Befehl für die gesamte SS und Polizei", 28.10.1939, T-175/15/2518603. Similar sentiments, though less forcefully, were presented by the Völkischer Beobachter (December 23,25,26,1939), 11, "Rudolf Hess an eine Unverheiratete Mutter".
- 57 Himmler addresses the complaints he received in his proclamation to "Alle Männer der SS und Polizei, 30.1.1940", T-175/15/2528676-77. On the impact of this order see, for example, Klaus-Jürgen Müller, *Das Heer und Hitler. Armee und nationalsozialistisches Regime*, Stuttgart 1969, 459.
- 58 "Planmäßiger Urlaub", 25 August 1943, T-175/71/2588499. In a letter to the wife of an SS man in 1943, Standartenführer Dr. Brandt, recommends that the planned meeting with her husband should take place at a time auspicious for impregnation. Heiber, *Reichsführer!*, doc. #233, 211. For an example of official encouragement to procreate see "Mahnung und Verpflichtung", T-175/71/2588508. Guidelines for selecting the right partner for marriage were presented in "Heiraten - aber wen?", *Schwarzes Korps* (18 May 1944), 4.
- 59 Ackermann, *Ideologe*, 136.
- 60 "Rede des Reichsführer-SS vor Vertretern der deutschen Justiz in Cochem, 25.5.1944", T-174/93/2613805.
- 61 Kersten, *Memoirs*, 176-178, 182. Hitler apparently suggested that the postwar birth rate could be increased through a system of plural marriages. Cf. Hale, "Memorandum". A logical extension of this line of thought was the subsequent recommendation that the partner of a childless marriage who was barren should give the other and fertile partner permission to procreate outside of the marriage. Heinrich Fraenkel, and Roger Manvell, *Himmler. Kleinbürger und Massenmörder*, London 1965, 92; "eine

- Frau hat das Wort," Das Schwarze Korps (28 October 1937), 6. The propagation of illegitimate children had of course been already considered during peace times. "We cannot relinquish, wrote the SS paper, "the children of those women ... who cannot become wives yet who can still be mothers". "Heilig ist uns jede Mutter guten Blutes", Das Schwarze Korps (30 December 1937), 9-
- 62 Berlin Document Center, SSO personnel file of Graf von Hoym, "H. is still without children ... The Reichsführer fundamentally rejects promotions of childless Führer". Equally revealing is a letter by SS-Hauptsturmführer Richard Schrutz (SSO file) who went to great lengths to explain, after his promotion had been refused, that his seven month marriage was indeed a success; his wife already had one miscarriage and is now pregnant. See also Heiber, Reichsführer!, 196. Cf. "Traurige Statistik", Das Schwarze Korps (11 April 1938), 8.
- 63 Berlin Document Center, SSO personnel file of Konrad Füll.
- 64 Berlin Document Center, SSO personnel file of Karl Fichtner.
- 65 "Bevölkerungspolitik im SS-Führer Korps, Stand 1.12.1938", T-175/123/649255-270.
- 66 The individual SS-Führer for this study were identified by way of the Dienstaltersliste der Schutzstaffel der NSDAP. Stand 31.12.1938, Bearbeitet von der Personalkanzlei, Berlin 1938, which furnished the name (among other identifying information) of all SS-Führer according to rank. This rank stratified list was further subdivided into three strata consisting of the SS-Totenkopfverbände (TV), the SS-Verfügungstruppe (VT), and the Allgemeine SS (Allg.SS). Once the Führer were identified, biographical information on them was collected from the SSO and RuSHA personnel records of the Berlin Document Center. Because the TV and VT strata had relatively few cases (N=437 and N=766 respectively), I decided to collect data on all those individuals who belonged to one of these groups. As to the Allg.SS, it was too large /total population N=12,669) to collect information on all individuals. Consequently, a systematic random sample of 900 men was chosen to represent this branch of the SS: Because records for a certain number of individuals could not be located, and some information was not identifiable because documents had been damaged, the final samples consist of 400 TV, 692 and 851 Allg.SS members (total N=1943).
- 67 "Bevölkerungspolitik im SS-Führer Korps, Stand 1.12.1938", T-175/123/649255-270. For obvious reasons early marriages were promoted among SS personnel. See for example "Wann sollen wir heiraten?", Das Schwarze Korps (10 September 1936). It has been pointed out, however, that bureaucratic inefficiency in the handling of mandatory marriage requests was delaying both marriage and potential chilbearing. Equally counterproductive were orders requiring "SS officer candidates, staff officers attached to the Hauptämter, and members of the SS-Verfügungstruppe to marry until they were past the age of twenty-seven, unless they attained certain ranks prior to that data." Thompson, "Lebensborn", 65.
- 68 Himmler's concern about the marital status of his men is reflected in the wartime correspondence of Standartenführer Dr. Brandt. See Heiber, Reichsführer!, doc. // 366, 297 and doc // 277, 239.
- 69 "Bevölkerungspolitik im SS-führer Korps, Stand 1.12.1948", T-175/123/649257-
- 70 Jill Stephenson, "'Reichsbund der Kinderreichen': The League of Large Families in the Population Policy of Nazi Germany", European Studies Review 9 (1979), 368.
- 71 Contemporary explanations for the increase in fertility are provided by Conrad and Irene Tauber, "German Fertility Trends in 1933-1939", American Journal of Sociology 46 (October 1940), 151-164; P.K. Whelpton, "Why the Large Rise in the German Birth Rate?", American Journal of Sociology 41 (November 1935), 299-313; and Hans Staudinger, "Germany's Population Mi-

- racle", *Social Research* 5 (May 1938), 125-148. A more sceptical view is expressed by J. Hajnal, "The Analysis of Birth Statistics in the Light of Recent International Recovery of the Birth Rate", *Population Studies* 1 (September 1947), 137-164 and more recently Stephenson, "Reichsbund", *op.cit.*
- 72 By comparing the fertility levels of the 1930s with those of the 1950s and early 1960s, both Knodel and Stephenson reach the conclusion that the Nazis found themselves in a period which signaled either the end or at least the stabilization of a secular decline in fertility. Knodel, *Decline*, 52, 246-247, and Stephenson, "Reichsbund", 369.
- 73 Statistisches Reichsamt, **Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich** 1941/42, Berlin, 66.
- 74 Statistisches Bundesamt, **Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland**, Wiesbaden 1960, 61; 1980, 67; 1984, 70.
- 75 Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik, **Statistisches Jahrbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik**, Berlin 1956, 38, 1984, 356.
- 76 C. Alison McIntosh, "Low Fertility and **Liberal Democracy in Western Europe**", *Population and Development Review* 7 (June 1981), 201.
- 77 Edward Shorter, "Female Emancipation, Birth Control, and Fertility in European History", *American Historical Review* 78 (June 1973), 612-640.