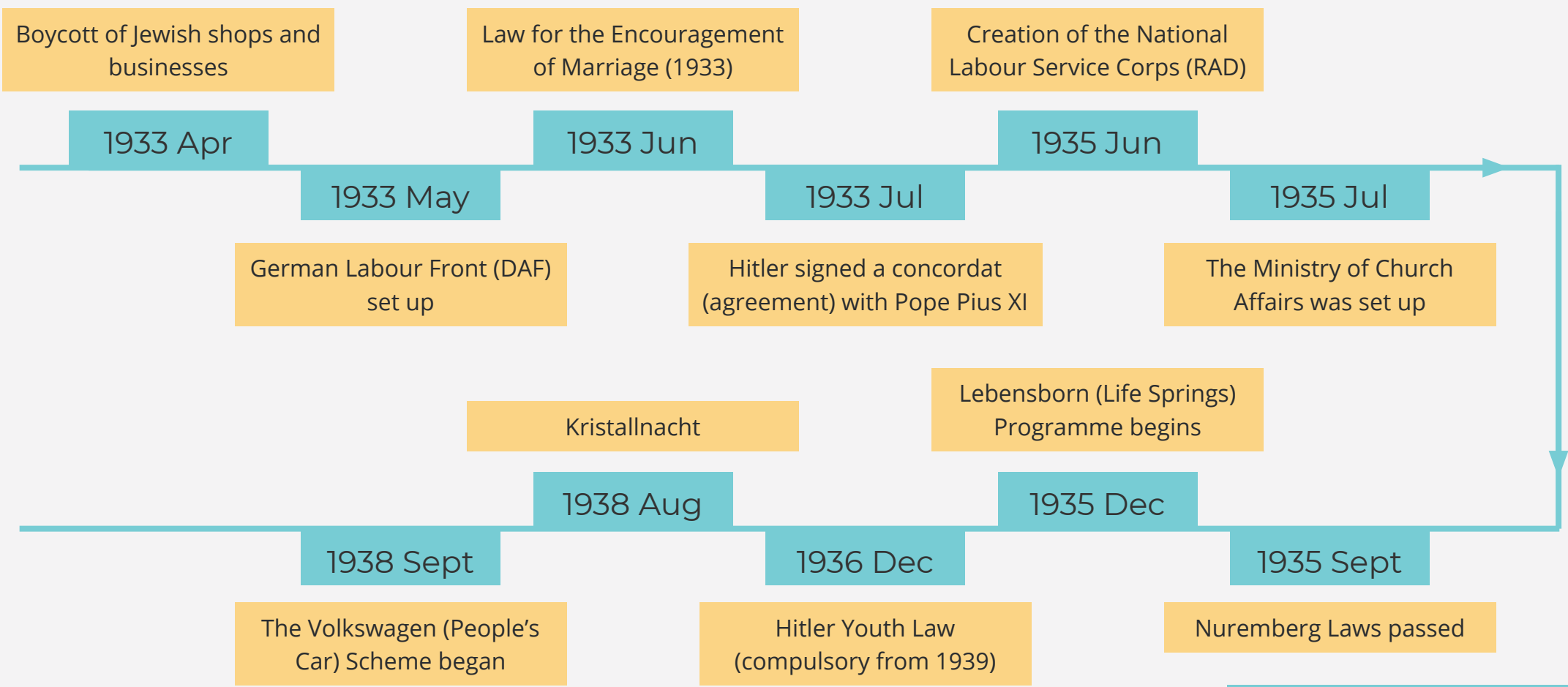


Key Question 5 : How did Nazi economic, social and racial policy affect life in Germany?

Timeline of events



What were the Nazis policies towards young people?

Hitler indoctrinated young people to turn them into loyal Nazis by (a) controlling education:

- Teachers had to belong to the Nazi Teachers' League.
- The curriculum for the boys was preparation for the military; for the girls it was to become good homemakers and mothers.
- Lessons were used to promote Nazi ideals and textbooks were rewritten to reflect Nazi views.

... and (b) through the Hitler Youth Movement:

- The Hitler Youth Law of 1936 made it difficult to avoid joining by allowing pressure to be put on parents.
- The Second Hitler Youth Law of 1939 made membership compulsory. By 1939 there were 7 million members, although there were 16 million young people in Germany in total.

What were the Nazis policies towards religion?

- Hitler set up the Ministry of Church Affairs in 1935 to weaken the hold that Catholic and Protestant churches had on the people.
- The German Faith Movement was encouraged by the Nazis to replace Christian values with pagan (non-Christian) ideas.
- Hitler signed a concordat (agreement) with the Pope and the Catholic Church that they would leave each other alone.
- Some Protestants established a pro-Nazi Reich Church, others opposed Nazism like Pastor Neimöller

Important concept

Totalitarianism was the idea that the government would control every aspect of people's lives.

“Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Führer”

Key words

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Four-Year Plan | A plan which to make Germany ready for war within four years, prioritising to rearmament and autarky |
| Autarky | A Nazi government policy of making Germany self-sufficient with no foreign imports |
| Three Ks | Kinder, Kuche, Kirche – Children, Kitchen, Church. |
| Indoctrination | Making someone accept a system of thought without question |
| Protestant | Christian churches that were not controlled by the Pope in Rome |
| Catholic | Christian churches that were controlled by the Pope in Rome |
| Anti-Semitism | Hatred of the Jews |
| Aryan | Nazi term for a non- Jewish German; someone of supposedly 'pure' German stock |

Key Question 5 : How did Nazi economic, social and racial policy affect life in Germany?

How did the Nazis rebuild the German economy?

- Hitler reduced unemployment from 6 million to less than ½ million by 1939.
- Invisible unemployment - did not count Jews or women in job figures.
- National Labour Service Corps (RAD) - compulsory for all males aged 18-25 to serve in the RAD for six months.
- RAD were put to work on public works schemes building autobahns (motorways), hospitals, schools and houses as well as planting trees.
- Rearmament - created jobs in the army and industry.
- Goering introduced the Four-Year Plan (1936-40) to speed up rearmament, and introduce autarky which was designed to make Germany self-sufficient.
- Trades unions were replaced the German Labour Front (DAF) to discipline workers, regulating pay and hours of work.
- Strength through Joy (KdF) aimed to improve leisure time by sponsoring subsidised leisure activities and cultural events.
- The Beauty of Work organisation aimed to improve working conditions by building canteens and sports facilities.
- Volkswagen (People's Car) Scheme helped workers to save for their own car.

What were the Nazi policies towards women?

- During the Weimar period women achieved equal voting rights with men, got a good education, had careers in the professions.
- Nazis believed women should follow the Three K's (Kinder, Küche, Kirche - Children, Kitchen, Church) i.e. give up their jobs, marry, start a family.
- Law for the Encouragement of Marriage - loans to encourage couples to marry, and they would not have to pay it back if they had four children.
- The Motherhood Cross medal was introduced to reward women - bronze for 4 children, silver for 6 and gold for 8
- Lebensborn (Life Springs) Programme - Unmarried Aryan women were encouraged to 'denote a baby to the Führer' by becoming pregnant by 'racially pure' SS men.

What were the Nazis policies towards the Jews and minorities?

Hitler argued that pure Germans - Aryans - formed the 'master race'; to protect this the Nazis sterilised the mentally ill, the physically disabled, homosexuals, black people and gypsies.

The Nazis used anti-Semitism to blame the Jews for Germany's recent problems e.g. losing the First World War, hyperinflation, the Depression.

Hitler had no master plan to eliminate the Jews until 1939 but there were many ways in which the Jews were persecuted -

- The Nazis encouraged people to boycott Jewish shops.
- The Jews were banned from doing important jobs like teaching, working in the civil service or being doctors.
- The 1935 Nuremberg Laws took away the citizenship of the Jews and made it illegal for them to have relationships with Aryans.
- Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) 1938 - Goebbels organised attacks on Jewish property in cities across Germany - over 7500 Jewish shops were destroyed, 400 synagogues burnt down, 100 Jews were killed, 30,000 were arrested; Jews were fined 1 billion Reichmarks for the damage.