



Volume 7. Nazi Germany, 1933-1945

Himmler's Response to Complaints regarding his "Procreation Decree" of October 28, 1939
(January 30, 1940)

In 1939, neither the German public, nor the churches, nor various representatives of the state, the party, and the Wehrmacht were prepared to abandon their conservative social mores in favor of Himmler's radical population policies. In the following statement from January 20, 1940, Himmler explained various aspects of the controversy surrounding his instructions from the previous October.

Berlin, 30 January 1940

The Reichsführer SS and
Chief of the German Police

SS Order for the whole of the SS and Police

You are aware of my order of 28 October 1939, in which I reminded you of your duty if possible to become fathers of children during the war.

This publication, which was conceived with a sense of decency and was received in the same sense, states and openly discusses actual problems. It has led to misconceptions and misunderstandings on the part of some people. I therefore consider it necessary for every one of you to know what doubts and misunderstandings have arisen and what there is to say about them.

1. Objection has been taken to the clear statement that illegitimate children exist, and that some unmarried and single women and girls have always become mothers of such children outside marriage and always will.

There is no point in discussing this; the best reply is the letter from the Führer's Deputy to an unmarried mother which I enclose together with my order of 28 October 1939.

2. The worst misunderstanding concerns the paragraph which reads:

“Beyond the limits of bourgeois laws and conventions ...” According to this, as some people misunderstand it, SS men are encouraged to approach the wives of serving soldiers. However incomprehensible to us such an idea may be, we must discuss it.

What do those who spread or repeat such opinions think of German women? Even if, in a nation of 82 million people, some man should approach a married woman from dishonorable motives or human weakness, two parties are needed for seduction: the one who wants to seduce and the one who consents to being seduced.

Quite apart from our own principle that one does not approach the wife of a comrade, we think that German women are probably the best guardians of their honor. Any other opinion should be unanimously rejected by all men as an insult to German women.

Furthermore, the question has been raised as to why the wives of the SS and police are looked after in a special way and not treated the same as all the others.

The answer is very simple: because the SS through their willingness to make sacrifices and through comradeship have raised the necessary funds, through voluntary contributions from leaders and men, which have been paid for years to the *Lebensborn* [Lifespring] organization.

Following this statement all misunderstandings should have been cleared up.

But it is up to you SS men, as at all times when ideological views have to be put across, to win the understanding of German men and women for this sacred issue so vital to our people and which is beyond the reach of all cheap jokes and mockery.

The Reichsführer SS
H. Himmler

Source of English translation: Jeremy Noakes, ed., *Nazism, 1919-1945*, Vol. 4: *The German Home Front in World War II*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998, p. 372.

Source of original German text: Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Aus deutschen Urkunden 1935-1945*. n.p., n.d. [1946?], pp. 174-75.