

Gymnastics in the Garden of the School for Reich Brides and Mothers on Schwanenwerder Island in Berlin (1938)

Abstract

A number of official party-sponsored social service organizations, such as the Mother and Child Relief Agency of the National Socialist People's Welfare Organization [*NS-Volkswohlfahrt* or NSV] or the Reich Mothers' Service of German Women's Enterprise [*Deutsches Frauenwerk* or DFW] were supposed to encourage women to have more children and to prepare them for their role as housewives and mothers. The Mother and Child Relief Agency offered more than just education; for example, among other services, it offered medical care and financial support for pregnant women, as well as childcare in its own kindergartens. The Reich Mothers' Service also offered a variety of courses that taught women about pregnancy, housekeeping, child rearing, and racial hygiene. By the spring of 1939, an estimated 1.7 million German women had taken part in these programs. Behind the charitable façade of these organizations lurked clear ideological and sociopolitical goals: women were to earn their place in the national community by having as many healthy children as possible and by giving them a proper Nazi upbringing.

Source



Source: Gymnastics in the garden of the School for Reich Brides and Mothers on Schwanenwerder Island in Berlin. Photo: Liselotte Purper (Orgel-Köhne).

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