

“Our People in Danger” (1934)

Abstract

Otto Spatz (1900–1989) was a German bookseller, publisher, and writer who used the pseudonym Otto Helmut. He was an active member of the German Society for Racial Hygiene [Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene]. After the Society’s union with the NSDAP in 1937, Spatz became an active Nazi Party member. As a racial hygienist, Spatz believed that the “Aryan race” was in ever-present danger. This illustration, taken from his 1934 book *Volk in Gefahr* [Our People in Danger], outlines these threats. At the time the book was published, Germany was suffering from a declining birth rate, a problem that most of Western Europe had contended with since the end of the First World War. The Nazis, however, perceived the declining birth rate as a threat to the Aryan race. As Spatz suggests here, Jews and Sinti and Roma populations were not the only groups out-producing desirable Aryan families. Families headed by men with criminal records, those with no fathers at all, and families with disabled children were allegedly out-producing the classic German family, spelling danger for the race.

Statistics like these were used to justify a host of persecutory measures like the forced sterilization of undesirable members of the race. At the same time, in an effort to encourage “ideal” couples to marry and procreate, the regime introduced loans for new couples, and forced married women, the so-called double earners, to resign from the labor force. For those deemed worthy, the regime promoted an intensely pro-natalist worldview; for those deemed unworthy, there was persecution and exclusionary policies.

Source



Source: Otto Helmut, *Volk in Gefahr: der Geburtenrückgang und seine Folgen für Deutschlands Zukunft*. Munich: J. F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1934, p. 29.

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