**Hello there Year 12. Please read the Question carefully, treat this as you would an exam. This is a 24 mark question (THE LONG ONE).**

**THIS IS DUE 18/11/2013 – 18th November 2013.**

**'Nazi policies towards German workers and peasant did little to improve the lives of these groups in the years 1933 to 1939.'**

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Candidates should be able to make a judgement by balancing evidence which supports the view those German workers and peasants gained little from Nazi policies in the years 1933 to 1939 against that which does not.

Evidence which agrees might include:

* Workers lost bargaining rights, pay increases were controlled and there was a lack of freedom of movement. Choice and free-time were curtailed, as had been the trade unions. The KdF was a propaganda ‘sham’.
* The Reich Food Estate (1933) was headed by Richard Darré and controlled every aspect of agricultural production and consumption.
* Farms were not allowed to be divided.
* Despite public support for farmers, there was a drift to the towns in the late 1930s as peasants sought higher wages.
* Any improvements were due to other factors such as rearmament and an overall world pick up in trade, not specific Nazi policies.
* Workers’ wages were earned by working longer hours.
* The level of production of industrial goods far outstripped consumer goods.

Evidence which disagrees might include:

* Workers had regular work, stable rents and recreational and cultural provision was organised by the KdF.
* There was security of tenure of medium sized farms.
* The workers recognised the regime as the source of their economic recovery and perhaps as the creators of the ‘economic miracle’.
* A substantial number of farm debts were written off.
* All farmers benefitted from increased prices between 1933 and 1939.
* Workers were not being driven to breaking point to reach targets as in the Soviet Union.
* An increase in wages. Compared to 1928 levels, by 1938 wages had recovered by 85%.

Good answers are likely to conclude that it is perhaps important to look at the well-being of workers and peasants from a wider perspective than just an economic one. Varying degrees of tolerance of Nazi policies did not necessarily equate with material well-being. Political emasculation was a significant grievance. Also an awareness of differentiation over time might prove profitable. Candidates may choose to identify 1936 as a bridging date to highlight the impact of rearmament on the lives of workers and peasants. In general both workers and farmers had mixed feelings about Nazi policies.

There is much debate over the material wellbeing of German workers and peasants. Superficially the statistics might suggest an improvement but not a large one. In relative terms the picture is somewhat different. At best the standard of living was static; at worst it fell. Stephen Lee’s analysis – Chapter 5 in Hitler and Nazi Germany – is worthwhile. Sophisticated answers will note that material conditions did vary from one class to another and the picture is blurred by variables such as age and geographical location. Finally, it is clear that the best gains were made by those in industries associated with the rearmament boom, while those in consumer goods struggled to maintain their real incomes.

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