

# Winterhilfswerk

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The **Winterhilfswerk** (short **Winterhilfswerk** or **WHW**) was in the era of National Socialism, a foundation under public law, the collected materials, and financial and therefore needy "national comrades" either directly or through subsidiary organizations of "National Socialist People's Welfare" (NSV) supported.

By Winterhilfswerk the Nazi regime could alleviate the material needs of segments of the population and contribute to the internal stabilization. At the same time the fund raising aimed at the sense of unity of the "national community". The donations surpassed from the accounting year 1939/1940, the sum that has been applied from tax revenues for public welfare organizations. <sup>[1]</sup> The state budget was thus of social spending relieved.

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Glass Mosaic (1935/1936) of the company Puhl & Wagner, exhibit of Braith-Mali Museum in Biberach an der Riss

## Precursor

Relief and fundraising, which were carried out during the winter months and needy segments of the population benefited, there were at the regional level before 1933. For the unemployed organized as the "Workers 'Greater Hamburg' since 1923 winter collections; it is the most diverse organizations such as trade unions, concerned German Civil Service Federation or German Nationalist Commercial Employees Association. <sup>[2]</sup>

Nationwide were the carriers of the "non-statutory welfare" - Caritas, Inner Mission, German Red Cross, Central Welfare Office of the German Jews and German Joint Welfare Association - a common voice in 1924 the German League of Voluntary Welfare. While trade unions and workers' welfare (AWO) called for comprehensive economic and social policies, planned the "League" a centrally organized collection of "People's Aid". The appeal under the heading "Not, destitution is higher than the German people" was supported by Chancellor Heinrich Brüning supported. <sup>[3]</sup>

The first collection of the so-called "Winter Help" was conducted from 15 September 1931 to March 1932 and brought 42 million Reichsmarks a <sup>[4]</sup>; another collection followed in the winter of 1932/33.

## Organization

In the summer of 1933 began Joseph Goebbels with the organizational preparations for the collection campaign of Nazi Winterhilfe. <sup>[5]</sup> On September 13, 1933 opened Adolf Hitler the "First Winter relief against hunger and cold." In his speech he noted the always fighting "international Marxist solidarity", the "living national solidarity of the German people" against the "bleeding excessively due forever" is. <sup>[6]</sup> The Hamburg Gauleiter Karl Kaufmann called the Winter Relief few days later "a great state political task "with the aim of the workers' internally to win". <sup>[7]</sup>

The Winter Relief was organisationally the Nazi People's Welfare and their conductor Erich Hilgenfeldt subordinated, who acted as chief officer in the Office of People's Welfare of the Nazi Party and as Reich Commissioner for the WHW at the same time. Some charities like the AWO were banned, while others such as the "German welfare organization" connected and dissolved corporation. The predominantly denominationally specific organizations should be pushed back to the fields of work and care institution operating while the NSI for the physical needs of distressed "fellow countrymen" stressed, which propaganda could evaluate better. High Nazi officials staged themselves in public as people associated collectors.

With the "Law on the Winterhilfswerk" (RGBl. I, p 995) of 1 December 1936 the WHW explains headquartered in Berlin for unincorporated foundation under civil law, represented by the Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda performed and should be supervised. The "Constitution of the WHW of the German People" from 24 March 1937 (Reich Law Gazette I, p. 423) introduced the principle of "common good before self-interest" out of already the 25-point program was included the NSDAP.

On October 10, 1945, the Winter Relief was in Control Council Law no. 2 by the Allied Control Council banned and confiscated the property.

## Raising activities

The total number of mostly volunteer "permanent workers" was in the winter of 1933/1934 approximately 1,500,000 people and leveled off in the following years on a number to 1,200,000 a. [8] For the monthly cash collections, the streets were systematically recorded; the fine-meshed collection districts of the structure of the National Socialist Party organization were adjusted and the helpers to block conductors and "Block trustees" of the Nazi People's Welfare assumed. The ranges Street collections were in 1934 from the Day of National Solidarity crowned in the high party functionaries and popular artist with collection boxes took to the streets.

Winter relief was opened each year by a speech by Hitler, which was broadcast on the radio. For incipient in October clothes collection, the inhabitants were by Hitler Youth -Aufmärsche and Sturmabteilung attuned chapels, later rang at every door. All households received bags were delivered and thus to pound donation prompted. In December Lose an Empire Winter Aid Lottery were sold at 0.50 Reichsmark. In Hamburg, a five-meter-high swastika was erected, which was nailed against a fixed donation. Put particular emphasis on the propaganda of the monthly pot Sunday, in which the saved at the usual Sunday lunch money was expected and cashed as a donation. In addition, there were several more revenue through specially organized sports competitions, "shooting victim", theaters and concerts, WHW stamps, Gau-street collections and collecting cans in shops.



A Hamburger Crime Survey noted in October 1933, "a prerequisite for the success of the Winter Help [is] the fight against begging Menace". [9] In a special manhunt in the Hamburg metropolitan area then around 1,400 persons were days in "protective custody taken" and a part of them for longer time in the "care home Farmsen" set [10].

## Victims of wage and salary

In the pre-war years, however, the largest item on the revenue side were the "donations from companies and organizations" and the "victims of wage and salary" and - declining importance - the in-kind donations.

As a mandatory monthly payroll deductions during the winter months were the workers for the WHW viewed. The employer considered certain portions of salary or wages and transferred the sum to the account of the Winter Relief. The deductions were initially not regulated uniformly rich. In Hamburg has been deducted at a monthly income of 200 RM by a childless family RM 1.50; in three children has halved the trigger. With higher income, he rose to a maximum of 25 RM. Six months an amount was withheld worth ten percent of the tax deductions and paid to the Winter Relief: In the fall of 1936, the deductions have been adjusted range. [11] Employers themselves were encouraged to donate a certain set of their personal expenses. The visible sign of recognition, the donors received monthly plaques with the inscription "We help".

In the donations initially outweighed furniture, used clothing and coal and potatoes. But the freight costs for this amounted to approximately 10 million Reichsmarks, but were of the Deutsche Reichsbahn not billed.

## Donations

The first collection of the WHW provided monetary and material donations worth 358.1 million Reichsmark. In the following winter half years, the donation amount increased constantly. The total value of donations [12] was as follows:

- 1933/34: 358 100 000 Reichsmark
- 1934/35: 367 400 000 Reichsmark
- 1935/36: 364 500 000 Reichsmark
- 1936/37: 415 200 000 Reichsmark
- 1937/38: 419 million Reichsmark [13]
- 1938/39: 566 million Reichsmark
- 1939/40: 680 100 000 Reichsmark
- 1940/41: 916 200 000 Reichsmark
- 1942-43: 1595.0 million Reichsmarks

The annual report for the winter half-year 1937/38 lists the revenue and expenditure comprehensively; below the major items: [14]

Value (RM)	WHW 1937/38: revenues by	Remark
103 615 000	Donations from organizations and companies	
101 972 000	Donations	Coal, potatoes, food, furniture, books, etc. / incl. Pound donation
80554000	"Victims of wages and salaries"	the employer withheld (10% of income tax assets)
34741000	Stew Donations	see Stew Sunday
34290000	Street Collections	six of empire-street collections with RM 30,162,000
9958000	Freight subsidies for coal transportation	Adoption of freight costs of the Deutsche Reichsbahn
8084000	Day of National Solidarity	on December 4, 1937
7175000	Gau-Events	Victims books victim Shooting Events
6404000	Individual donations	incl. agricultural donation 1968000 RM
1404000	WHW stamps	Sale of special stamps

## Distribution

The needy were able to district offices of the winter relief organization submitting requests and there were coupons for the purchase of coal and potatoes for total production and other property and payments in kind. Cash were not provided. In winter 1936, a support legitimate family with three children up to thirteen fuel vouchers 200 kg of potatoes, food vouchers worth 30 Reichsmark, five vouchers for clothing or food, and three packages at Christmas, Easter and January 30th (anniversary could takeover) received ; the total value of those benefits is calculated at around 100 RM. <sup>[15]</sup>

Of those listed above for 1937/38 donations worth a total of approximately 420 million Reichsmarks loud Accountability report nearly 70% were distributed to 8,931,456 persons in need. Around 30% were via the National Socialist People's Welfare (NSV) of the Fund mother and child, at the "Reich Mothers service" of the German Women's work, the TB Fund, the school dental care and the German Red Cross. <sup>[16]</sup> The proportion of donations that for NSV charities was diverted, rose in the following years: From donations of WHW action 1940/41, which amounted to 916.2 million Reichsmark, approximately 540 million were on the run by the NSA "Hilfswerk mother and child" transferred. <sup>[17]</sup>

The Winter Relief was therefore an indispensable financier of the Nazi People's Welfare, in turn, a "Nazi racial-genetic biology People Care" operation. Primarily aimed the Nazi People's Welfare with its affiliated organizations on from that "genetically healthy" and "racially high value" to promote the sense of a "people care" with "social biological, eugenic in and educational mission" to "conservation and upgrading of the powerful members for their tasks the national community ". <sup>[18]</sup> From this ideological limitation, the Winter Relief in the first years sat still well off by principle could give you all the support needy. From the end of 1936, Jews were made to Jewish welfare agencies; these supported thereupon 87,761 needy, ie around 20% of all Jews living in Germany. <sup>[19]</sup> Jewish mongrels and needy families from mixed marriages were still supported by WHW, unless the head of household "German blood was".

From the official annual report does not indicate that Goebbels certain about the collected donations and funds branched off. Although Goebbels wrote in 1937: "We advise on the use of funds. I'll stop at that, that now herumschmarotzen all dilettantes it. These funds are used exclusively socialist construction ". <sup>[20]</sup> But first he had in January of the same year 100 million Reichsmark" free disposal "withheld and leave part of it Adolf Hitler:" ... the 30 million from the WHW be used for [missing word :. construction] a giant factory for the Volkswagen <sup>[21]</sup> financed by donations and the construction of hospitals and the purchase of" 40,000 people receivers for Austria ". <sup>[22]</sup>

## Judgments of contemporaries

"I have been deducted at a volunteers Winter Help "; No one has asked me about it in advance, "wrote Victor Klemperer in 1933 and called it a" thinly veiled coercion. "<sup>[23]</sup> In Bertolt Brecht in exile wrote *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* treated a short 1937 gambling scene the Winter Relief. In it bestow two SA men at first an old woman and her daughter. After the old woman is the thank by pointing out that it was not so bad as the man's daughter says, blabbed, is the daughter, despite desperate protestations and entreaties of the old woman, was arrested by the SA men. The scene is preceded by the following poem:

Contact The Winter helper  
With banners and trumpets  
Even in the poorest house.  
They drag proud extorted  
Rags and leftovers  
For the poor neighbors out.

The hand that killed her brother  
Sufficient that they do not complain  
A charitable gift in Eil.  
There remain the alms Awakening  
You stuck in the throat  
And the Hitler salvation. <sup>[24]</sup>

The Germany-reports of the SPD in exile Sopade wrote: "The street collections, thanks to the unbridled, dedication 'of the HJ, BdM fully believed SA and SS the character of organized highway robbery." - "The' readiness' of these collections is well known. The spontaneous' terrorist actions against particularly restrained donors are still remembered. On various occasions authorities have taken the issue of contracts of sufficient WHW donations of candidates depends. "<sup>[25]</sup>

The Sopade service also pointed to high costs due to administration, distribution, storage and spoilage: "The technology of the Winter Relief Organization, which laid the emphasis on the natural economy, seems plausible primitive in the age of the money economy. [...] Propagandistic can be with this kind make more than bare-money collection. "<sup>[26]</sup>

The rapporteur of Sopade confessed but one: "And there are many people who are really with all my heart in the matter [collections for the WHW] and simply swept the others. The Nazis are extremely adept in these matters: [...] they create new forms of participation of the masses ... "<sup>[27]</sup>

Under the hood, the letter combination WHW was reinterpreted as "We are starving continue" or expressed "weapons Hilfswerk" and the suspicion that it will finance the upgrade of an impending war. <sup>[28]</sup>

## Interpretations of historians

Herwart Vorländer is collectively fixed: It prevailed despite harassment by his contemporaries the feeling of having done something "for a good cause": "The fact that at least here the Third Reich had a silver lining, is in the memory of many as liable impression and as Late effects of that propaganda survived. "<sup>[28]</sup>

Compared to the developed in the 19th century the state social policy, which has been fed from general taxation, the donations being was an outdated form of assistance. Florian Tennstedt formulated: "The Winter Relief band initially also wide bourgeois circles a further won sympathy among the poor and worked especially within the party allegiance entpolitisierend and disciplining "by her activism was aimed at raising activities. <sup>[29]</sup>



Pack of Christmas packages,  
December 1935

## Comparable organizations

The concept of the Winter Relief was the Francoist Spain, where, taken in the form of *Auxilio de Invierno*.

In Gdansk there was since 1934 a Winter Relief, for the well surcharge stamps were issued and a postcard lottery was held.

## Image Gallery



Compilation of Christmas packages in Berlin for the Winter Relief 1935

Billboard Winter Relief Organization in Nuremberg 1936

Fundraising on a poster of Helmut Ellgaard 1938

German soldiers with a banner Winter Relief Organization in occupied Lapland 1942

Stamp of the German Reichspost (1943), value: 12 + 38 Pfennig for the Winter Relief

Payroll in February 1941: deduction Winterhilfe

Winter Relief - Button from shooting victims

- Herwart Vorländer: *The NSV. Presentation and documentation of a Nazi organization*. Boppard on the Rhine in 1988, ISBN 3-7646-1874-4.
- Herwart Vorländer: *NS People's Welfare and Winterhilfswerk In.: Quarterly Journal of Contemporary History* 34 (1986), pp 341-380.
- Florian Tennstedt: *generosity and interest. The Winterhilfswerk. The Weimar history and its instrumentalisation by the Nazi regime*. In: *History and Society* 13 (1987), pp 157-180.
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- Peter Zolling: *Between integration and segregation - social policy in the "Third Reich" the example of the NSV in Hamburg* (Diss.) Frankfurt / M. 1986. ISBN 3-8204-8530-9.

## links

**Commons: Winter Relief** ([https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate\\_c?depth=1&ei=INNETu\\_xAdKGhQeOm8mbBg&hl=en&prev=/search%3Fq%3DDeterding+Hitler&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=de&u=https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Winterhilfswerk\\_1937-38.jpg](https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?depth=1&ei=INNETu_xAdKGhQeOm8mbBg&hl=en&prev=/search%3Fq%3DDeterding+Hitler&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=de&u=https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Winterhilfswerk_1937-38.jpg)) - collection of images, videos and audio files

- Law on Winterhilfswerk ([https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate\\_c?depth=1&ei=INNETu\\_xAdKGhQeOm8mbBg&hl=en&prev=/search%3Fq%3DDeterding+Hitler&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=de&u=http://www.documentarchiv.de](https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?depth=1&ei=INNETu_xAdKGhQeOm8mbBg&hl=en&prev=/search%3Fq%3DDeterding+Hitler&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=de&u=http://www.documentarchiv.de)) from December 1, 1936 (Reich Law Gazette I, p 995)
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- WHW badge ([https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate\\_c?depth=1&ei=INNETu\\_xAdKGhQeOm8mbBg&hl=en&prev=/search%3Fq%3DDeterding+Hitler&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=de&u=http://www.dhm.de/lemo/html](https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?depth=1&ei=INNETu_xAdKGhQeOm8mbBg&hl=en&prev=/search%3Fq%3DDeterding+Hitler&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=de&u=http://www.dhm.de/lemo/html))
- Achievement: Winterhilfswerk 1933-1943 - a picture gallery ([https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate\\_c?depth=1&ei=INNETu\\_xAdKGhQeOm8mbBg&hl=en&prev=/search%3Fq%3DDeterding+Hitler&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=de&u=http://www.brueckenhof.de/vir%25201943&usg=ALkJrhhyQKacX6Z9sYc0DrTjB96qsJS39w](https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?depth=1&ei=INNETu_xAdKGhQeOm8mbBg&hl=en&prev=/search%3Fq%3DDeterding+Hitler&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=de&u=http://www.brueckenhof.de/vir%25201943&usg=ALkJrhhyQKacX6Z9sYc0DrTjB96qsJS39w))
- Hitler speech at the opening of the WHW 1936 ([https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate\\_c?depth=1&ei=INNETu\\_xAdKGhQeOm8mbBg&hl=en&prev=/search%3Fq%3DDeterding+Hitler&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=de&u=http://www.archive.org/details/Der-Fuehrer-eroeffnet-das-Winterhilfswerk&usg=ALkJrhhlB1TSXyPOFIN2sisoUMQTIEEt7g](https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?depth=1&ei=INNETu_xAdKGhQeOm8mbBg&hl=en&prev=/search%3Fq%3DDeterding+Hitler&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=de&u=http://www.archive.org/details/Der-Fuehrer-eroeffnet-das-Winterhilfswerk&usg=ALkJrhhlB1TSXyPOFIN2sisoUMQTIEEt7g)) film excerpt 3:25

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- Florian Tennstedt: *generosity and interest ...*, S. 173rd
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- Max Domarus: *Hitler. Speeches and proclamations*. Würzburg 1962. Vol. 1, p 300f.
- Peter Zolling: *Between Integration and segregation ...*, S. 164th
- Herwart Vorländer: *The NSV. Presentation and documentation of a Nazi organization*. 1988. ISBN 3-7646-1874-4, p237.
- Quoted in Peter Zolling: *Between Integration and segregation ...*, S. 164th
- Uwe Lohalm: *For a hard-working and 'genetically healthy' national community ...*, p 399. In *Hamburg the 'Third Reich'*, ed. of the Research Centre for Contemporary History Hamburg, Göttingen 2005 ISBN 3-89244-903-1
- table at Peter Zolling: *Between Integration and segregation ...*, S. 350th
- Herwart Vorländer: *NS People's Welfare and Winterhilfswerk ...* S. 273rd
- The source *Winterhilfswerk 1937/38: annual report* ed. the Kingdom Representative for the WHW calls 417,169,177 RM.
- Winterhilfswerk 1937/38: annual report* ed. rounded here from the Reich Commissioner for the WHW / significant items, values
- Peter Zolling: *Between Integration and segregation ...*, S. 170th
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18. Herwart Vorländer: *NS People's Welfare and Winterhilfswerk ...* S. 373rd
19. *The persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany 1933-1945, Vol 1 (1933-1937)*, Munich 2008, ISBN 978-3-486-58480-6, S. 615 (Doc. 254).
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23. Victor Klemperer: *LTI - notebook a philologists* Leipzig 1966, p 47 to October 23, 1933..
24. Bertolt Brecht: *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*. Suhrkamp Verlag, Berlin 1970 <sup>1</sup>, p. 91
25. *Germany reports the German Social Democratic Party (SOPADE), 1934-1940*, UNV. Nachdr. Salzhause 1980 2 (1935) p 1422 (December, 1935) / 3 (1936) p 1070 (august 1936)
26. *Germany reports the German Social Democratic Party*, 2 (1935) p 1423rd
27. *Germany reports the German Social Democratic Party*, 2 (1935) p 1432nd
28. Herwart Vorländer: *NS People's Welfare and Winterhilfswerk ...*, p 53rd
29. Florian Tennstedt: *generosity and interest ...*, S. 179th

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