

*HISTORICAL STUDY SERIES*

# **ANIMAL WELFARE**

*IN THE THIRD REICH*



**BY KERRY BOLTON**

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*"Thou shalt love God in all living things, animals and plants."*

Alfred Rosenberg, official philosopher of the National Socialist Party on the gallows at his Nuremberg execution. 1945-46

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*Cover Picture, Herman Goering, crusader for animal welfare.*



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*"A 'civilisation' that makes such a ridiculous fuss about alleged 'war crimes' - acts of violence against the actual or potential enemies of one's cause - and tolerates slaughter-houses and vivisection laboratories, and circuses and the fur industry (infliction of pain upon creatures that can never be FOR or AGAINST any cause), does not deserve to live. Out with it! Blessed the day it will destroy itself, so that a healthy, hard, frank and brave, nature-loving and truth-loving elite of overmen WITH A LIFE-CENTERED FAITH - a natural human aristocracy, as beautiful, on its own higher level, as the four legged-kings of the jungle - might again rise, and rule upon its ruins, for ever!"*

Savitri Devi, a leading post-war National Socialist Philosopher in her book *"Impeachment of Man"*.  
Calcutta, India, 1959.





# ANIMAL WELFARE IN THE THIRD REICH

## FOREWORD

Seventy years of pre and post war propaganda directed against National Socialism has suppressed the many remarkable achievements of the Third Reich in such fields as social justice, banking reform, medical research, ecology and, as we shall see, animal welfare.

Had it not been for the demonisation of all things "Nazi" and the reduction of National Socialism and the entirety of World War II to nothing more than the "Holocaust", we wonder how many lives for example could have been saved had the Third Reich's research into cancer been allowed to see the light of day amidst the rabble of a ruined Europe? How much of the flora and fauna of the earth would have been maintained and extended rather than despoiled and polluted for short-term profit had lessons been learnt from the pioneering ecological measures of National Socialist Germany?

As Dr Robert N Proctor has documented, National Socialist Germany was the first to initiate public education campaigns on the harmful effects of smoking. In 1939 Dr Franz Multer had established the connection between tobacco and lung cancer. The NS Government was the first to encourage breast self-examination and regular check-ups. There were cancer awareness months and mass screenings of women for cervical and breast cancer, Children were dentally examined, students were examined for TB and factory workers for silicosis and lung cancer. Strict occupational and health regulations protected workers. Alcohol advertising was banned and children were warned that coca cola was not healthy.<sup>1</sup>

As Dr Anna Bramwell has shown, National Socialist Germany also pioneered ecology, and Reich Peasant Leader and Minister of Agriculture Dr Walther Darre, widely recognised in Europe as a specialist in agriculture, is shown to be the father of the modern Green movement. Top ranking National Socialists such as Rudolf Hess and SS Reichsführer Himmler were enthusiasts of alternative health and organic farming.<sup>2</sup>

The farmer was protected against foreclosure, and loans were to be repaid from the yield without endangering one's livelihood. Children from the cities were sent to the country on holidays. The small family farm was encouraged and could not be confiscated or subdivided.

This focus on health and ecology had its basis in the National Socialist ideology of Blood and Soil of the eternal connection between the folk and the land, with the peasantry as the well-spring of a healthy folk. National Socialism itself was a manifestation of the Teutonic association with the primeval forests where the Roman legions had been halted. National Socialism was a nature centred rather than a man-centred creed that viewed the human being as intimately connected with nature, as custodian rather than as exploiter.

## ANIMAL WELFARE AND NATIONAL SOCIALIST PHILOSOPHY

By Kerry Bolton

Considering the manner in which National Socialism and the Third Reich have been presented as the epitome of inhumanity and cruelty, the anti-vivisection laws enacted are a puzzle that anti-vivisectionist liberals and Leftists attempt to rationalise. In *Reinventing Biology*, a collection of articles calling for a new scientific regard for animal rights, a chapter gives some background regarding animal welfare in the Third Reich, from the book *"The Nazi Treatment of Animals and People"*.

*"Around the end of the nineteenth century, kosher butchering and vivisection were the foremost concerns of the animal protection movement in Germany. These interests continued during the Third Reich and became formalized as laws. Before taking power, the Nazis had begun to prepare laws to address these issues. In 1927, a Nazi representative to the Reichstag called for measures against cruelty to animals and against kosher butchering. In 1932 a ban on vivisection was proposed by the Nazi party, and at the start of 1933, the Nazi representatives to the Prussian parliament met to enact this ban. On April 23, 1933, almost immediately after the Nazis came to power, they passed a set of laws regulating the slaughter of animals. In August 1933, Hermann Goering announced an end to the "unbearable torture and suffering in animal experiments" and threatened to "commit to concentration camps those who still think they can continue to treat animals as inanimate property." . . . The Nazi animal protection laws of November 1933 permitted experiments on animals in some circumstances but subject to a set of eight conditions and only with the explicit permission of the Minister of the Interior, supported by the recommendation of local authorities. The conditions were designed to eliminate pain and prevent unnecessary experiments. Horses, dogs, cats, and apes were singled out for special protection."*

*"In addition to the laws against vivisection and kosher slaughter, other legal documents regulating the treatment of animals were enacted from 1933 probably several times the number in the previous half century. These documents covered in excruciating detail a vast array of concerns, from the shoeing of horses to the use of anaesthesia. One law passed in 1936 showed 'particular solicitude' about the suffering of lobsters and crabs, stipulating that restaurants were not to kill crabs, lobsters, and*

other crustaceans by throwing them one at a time into boiling water. Several 'high officials' had debated the question of the most humane death for lobsters before this regulation was passed, and two officials in the Interior Ministry had prepared a scholarly treatise on the subject.

"The Nazis also sought to protect wildlife. In 1934 and 1935, the focus of Nazi legislation on animals shifted from farm animals and pets to creatures of the wild. The preface to the hunting laws of March 27, 1935, announced a eugenic purpose behind the legislation, stating, 'The duty of a true hunter is not only to hunt but also to nurture and protect wild animals, in order that a more varied, stronger and healthier breed shall emerge and be preserved'. Nazi veterinary journals often featured reports on endangered species. Goering in particular was concerned about the near extinction in Germany of the bear, bison, and wild horse and sought to establish conservation and breeding programs for dwindling species and to pass new and more uniform hunting laws and taxes. His game laws are still operative today".<sup>3</sup>

Dr Rolf Krieger, speaking at an international symposium stated that the present German animal protection laws go back to the *Reich Animal Welfare Law* of 1933;

"German animal welfare law is laid down in the Basic Law, the Animal Welfare Act, ratifying acts of several European Conventions and ordinances under the Animal Welfare Act, the Civil Code and the Code of Civil Procedure. These provisions focus on the 1972 Animal Welfare Act, amended in 1986 and 1998. Section 1 of this Act takes up the principle of ethical animal welfare already embodied in the Reich Animal Welfare Act of 1933: "The aim of this Act is to protect the lives and well-being of animals, based on the responsibility of human beings for their fellow creatures. No one may cause an animal pain, suffering or harm without good reason".<sup>4</sup>

### **The Struggle Against Vivisection**

In a radio address delivered in August 1933, Reichsmarschall Herman Goering, Minister President of Prussia, declared that the National Socialist attitude towards animal welfare is simply in accordance with the German character, much more is it in accordance with the National-



Socialist ideals on human spirituality. To equate animals with lifeless objects and permit their absolute jurisdiction over them is not acceptable. *"Volksgenossen! [Fellow Germans] Since the day I announced my edict against the torture of animals regarding vivisection, a flood of letters and telegrams has come to my office, agreeing enthusiastically, expressing their gratitude over my decision that, finally, stringent steps were taken to end the torture of animals. My edict may have come as a surprise like lightening out of a blue sky. But for years the struggle against vivisection has been going on. Much was said about it in scientific and unscientific discussions, but nothing was done about it. The National-Socialist Government was aware from the first day that severe measures had to be inaugurated, yet, it took a month until such a law, with all its ramifications, could be passed,*

*"In order to prevent the spreading of torture to animals before such law could be passed, I issued this decree, making use of a right that is accorded, to me, to put violators, who still think they can treat animals as a lifeless commodity, into protective custody or a concentration-camp."*

*"The German people have always shown great compassion for animals and issues concerning animal-rights. They always saw in animals, especially those which became their compatriots in house, homes and battles for thousands of years, yes, we can say; in many ways their co-workers and - one need only to think about the horses - even comrades in arms, creatures of God".*

*"For the German people, animals are not just living things in an organic sense, but creatures who have their own unique feelings, who feel pain, joy, and show loyalty and affection. Never would the German people's love for animals permit them to treat animals as objects without feelings or souls, to be used only as tools, or to be exploited, to be discarded, whether for reasons of usefulness or not, or to be tortured or destroyed for the same reasons".*

*"The fairy-tales and sagas of the Aryan peoples, especially the German people, tell of the spiritual harmony that exists between the Aryan people and the animal."*

### Goering's Prussian Legislation

Following the enactment of the first anti-vivisection laws in the world in Prussia under Minister-President Goering, a press release was published explaining the background:

*"The Prussian Minister-President Goering has released a statement stating that starting 16th August 1933 vivisection of animals of all kinds is forbidden in Prussia. He has requested that the concerned ministries draft a law after which vivisection will be punished with a high penalty. Until the law goes into effect, persons who, despite this prohibition, order, participate or perform vivisections on animals of any kind will be deported to concentration camps."*

R. O. Schmidt writing from a Buddhist point of view in the periodical *The White Flag*, praised the New Germany for the humane spirit towards animals:

*"Among all civilised nations, Germany is thus the first to put an end to the cultural shame of vivisection! The New Germany not only frees man from the curse of materialism, sadism, and cultural Bolshevism, but gives the cruelly persecuted, tortured, and until now, wholly defenseless animals their rights. Friends of animals and anti-vivisectionists of all states will joyfully welcome this action of the National Socialist government of the New Germany!"*

*"What Reichschancellor Adolf Hitler and Minister-President Goering have done and will do for the protection of animals should set the course for the leaders of all civilised nations! It is a deed which will bring the New Germany innumerable new elated friends in all nations. Millions of the friends of animals and anti-vivisectionists of all civilised nations thank these two leaders from their hearts for this exemplary civil deed!"*

*"Buddha, the Great loving spirit of the East, says: 'He who is kind-hearted to animals, heaven will protect!' May this blessing fulfil the leaders of the New Germany, who have done great things for animals, until the last. May the blessing hand of fate protect these bringers of a New Spirit, until their God-given earthly mission is fulfilled!"*

*"As we in the meantime have learned, a similar ban has been proclaimed in Bavaria. The formal laws are imminent - thanks to the energetic initiative of our peoples' chancellor Adolf Hitler, for whom all friends, of animals of the world will maintain forever their gratitude, their love, and their loyalty".*



### **National Socialist Comment on Goering's Law**

Graf E. Reventlow writing in *Reichswart*, the official publication of the "Union of Patriotic Europeans", stated in the lead article "Protection and Rights for the Animal", that "National Socialism has for the first time begun to show Germans the importance of the individual's duty toward the animal".

"Most Germans have been raised with the attitude that animals are created by God for the use and benefit of man. The Church gets this idea from the Jewish tradition. We have met with not a few clerics who defend this position with utmost steadfastness and vigour, yes one could say almost brutally. Usually they defend their position with the unstated intent of deepening and widening the chasm between man who has soul and soulless animals." (how do they know that?)

"The friend of animals knows to what inexpressible extent the mutual understanding between man and animal and feelings of togetherness can be developed, and there are many friends of animals in Germany, and also many who cannot accept animal torture out of simple humanitarian reasons. In general however, we still find ourselves in a desert of unfeeling and brutality as well as sadism. There is much to be done and we would first like to address vivisection, for which the words "cultural shame" do not even come close; in fact it must be viewed as a criminal activity."

National Socialist publications at the time commented on the Reventlow article:

"We German friends of animals and anti-vivisectionists have placed our hopes upon the Chancellor of the Reich and his comrades in arms who are, as we know, friends of animals. Our trust has not been betrayed! The New Germany brings proof that it is not only the herald but bringer of a new, higher, more refined, culture.

"Vivisection, a cultural shame in the whole civilised world, against which the best in all states have fought in vain for decades, will be banned in the New Germany! "A Reich Animal Protection Law which includes a ban on vivisection is imminent and just now comes the news, elating all friends of animals, that the greatest German state, Prussia, has outlawed vivisection with no exceptions!"

### Restrictions on Hunting

On July 3, 1934, Hitler announced to his cabinet laws aimed at eliminating the hunting of foxes with hounds as "unsporting".

The laws were introduced by Hermann Goering, Reich Hunting Master 'Reichsjaeagermeister'

The London *Daily Telegraph*, a pro-Tory newspaper, in attacking the Labour political attempts to ban fox hunting, sneeringly draws attention to the limitations placed on hunting in the Third Reich, including the ban of hunting with hounds. Ian Kershaw, Professor of modern history at Sheffield University, who has written a biography on Hitler, is quoted as stating that there was "a curiously ethical side" to the Nazis reforms.

*"The Nazis wanted a clean kill and felt that it was wrong to cause unnecessary suffering to the animal being hunted"*. The National Socialist laws gave animals more protection than any other country in the world. Kershaw states:

*"So the new laws banned all field sports that involved training and using animals to kill game and vermin. There was a belief that if you put an animal through unnecessary torture you were somehow injuring the feelings of the German nation,"*

The official National Socialist biography of Goering, which was written by Erich Gritzbach, says:

*"Goering is a fanatical friend of animals. He says: 'Whoever tortures animals violates the instincts of the German people.'"*

*"The same love of animals which he demonstrates in all he has to do with the animal world also imbues the Reich hunting law of 1934. Indeed it gives this law its deep ethical meaning. In Germany hunting on horseback, chasing animals with a pack of hounds is banned."*

In 1939 the hunting restrictions were extended to Austria when that country voted for incorporation into the Reich..

The London *Daily Telegraph* continued:

*"Before the Nazis came to power Germany's hunting laws varied from state to state. Goering decided that more order was needed and introduced sweeping legislative changes which were enforced throughout the Reich. Until Goering's Reich Hunting Law (Reichsjagdgesetz) of 1934, German hunters pursued deer, wild boar, hares and foxes on horseback."*

*"The foxes and hares were savaged to death by the hounds, while boar and deer -were pursued by specially-trained dogs until they were ex-*

hausted and surrounded. They were then finished off with long-bladed knives driven into the animal's heart."

"Goering adopted a moral code governing hunting called *Sporting Justice* (*Waidgerechtigkeit*) that had long been established in Germany. The code stipulates that it is unsporting to use animals such as dogs to kill game and vermin."

As indicated above by Dr Rolf Krieger, Germany's animal welfare laws, including hunting restrictions, enforced today, are based on the laws enacted under the Third Reich. Karl-Heinz Lehmann, the former vice-president of Germany's 220,000-member association for the protection of hunting, states:

"Goering gave *Sporting Justice* an almost religious importance and the laws still form the basis of today's hunting rules in reunified Germany". Since 1934, foxhunting in Germany has been carried out with shotguns, although terriers and dachshunds are used to drive out foxes when they go to ground. It is forbidden to hunt vixen when they are cubbing. The poisoning of foxes is also forbidden.

"Hunting deer and wild boar is done using beaters and dogs or the animals are shot from "hunting stands" set up all over farmland where game gathers. Bloodhounds are used to track down wounded game but not to kill."

"Goering's law still exerts a profound influence on other aspects of hunting in Germany today. No one is allowed to hunt without a licence, for example, and obtaining a licence is not easy: it involves attending more than 100 hours of lectures and practical tests and sitting a difficult three-hour written exam."

### ***Reich Master Huntsman***

Herman Goering was appointed Reich Master Huntsman (*Reichsjagermesiter*) in 1934. Like the vegetarian Hitler, whose closest companion remained his alsation 'Blondi', Goering had a genuine love of animals, Ulrich Scherping, Goering's Chief Forester, noted in 1937 that Goering's pet lions ("not just the cubs that society ladies like to be photographed with in the Berlin Zoo") shared a mutual empathy with Goering.

Britain's principal historian on the Third Reich, David Irving, comments in his Goering biography that "*there was no phoniness*" about the



empathy between Goering and the animal kingdom. *"An animal can smell fear, but it also seems to sense the true animal lover."*

As Minister President of Prussia in 1933 Goering found the hunting scene a reflection of Germany itself, plagued by petty rivalries and self-interest. He applied the principle of social ethics to hunting and animal welfare in the same spirit as National Socialism advanced social justice for the German folk.

Throughout Germany were a myriad of localised gaming laws and taxes. Irving writes:

*"Wildlife could be hunted down at will. Conservation and breeding of the dwindling species was impossible. In Germany, the eagle, bear, bison and wild horse were almost extinct."*

Goering directed Scherping to establish a single national hunting association to regulate hunting, restock the lakes, tend the forests, and protect endangered species. The association would levy taxes on huntsmen to pay for the maintenance of forests and game parks. On May 9th, 1933 he briefed Scherping that his Prussian hunting law should serve as the basis for an eventual Reich law. Irving states:

*"With one stroke of the pen he made it a criminal offence to kill an eagle, or hunt with poisons, artificial light, or the steel trap ( 'the hated medieval instrument of torture' ) ... His Prussian Game Law of January 18, 1934, was envied far beyond Germany's frontiers ..."*

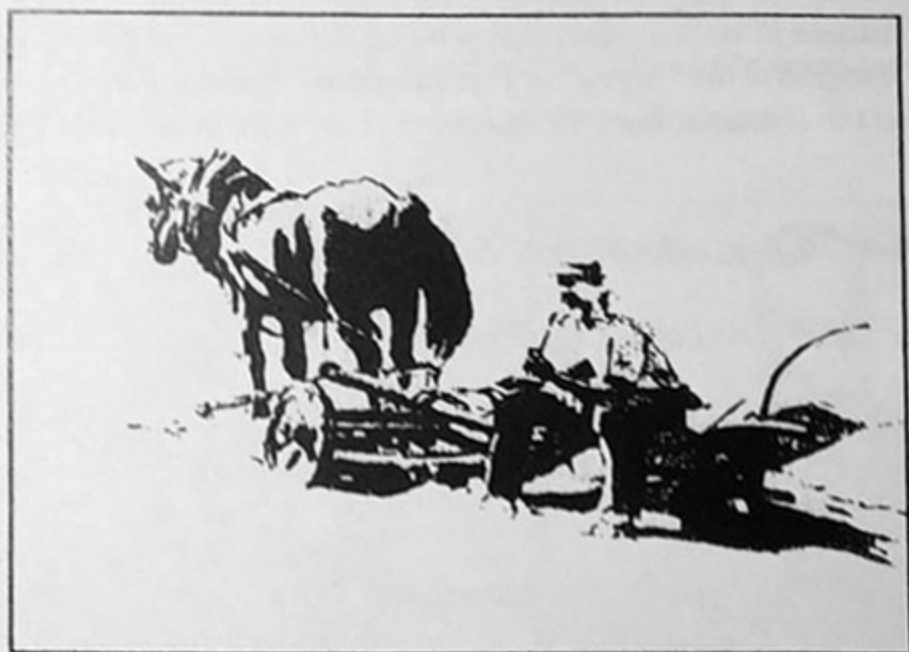
*"Keen to pioneer new techniques, he established nature reserves on Darss, a Pomeranian peninsula, and at Rominten in East Prussia. His proudest achievement was the Schorf Heath, on Berlin's doorstep. It was here ... that he inaugurated his new bison sanctuary ... He introduced elk as well. Successions of Prussian kings had tried and failed to restore this noble, ungainly beast to the Schorf Heath; he consulted zoologists, foresters, biologists ..."*

*"...The whole Schorf Heath experiment worked. from its Werbellin Lake Game Research Laboratory he reintroduced the rare fauna into the heath, like night owl, wood grouse, heathcock, grey goose, raven, beaver, and otter. During 1936, 140,000 townsfolk forked out 20 pfennigs apiece to tour the wildlife sanctuary. It became a forerunner of the great national parks in other countries."*

*"For us", he would tell huntsmen assembled for their Saint-Hubert's Day festival that November, "the forest is God's cathedral."*<sup>10</sup>

The pioneering efforts of the Third Reich in the realm of animal welfare, as in the realms of human social welfare, are an embarrassment to Left-oriented animal rights activists; whilst at the same time libertarians and pro-vivisectionists (correctly) describe prohibitions as "totalitarian" and "nazi". These types also (correctly) describe other intrusions on unbridled human liberty (read greed and hedonism) as "nazi".

If democracy and human rights mean the liberty to despoil the earth, pollute, ravage the forests and inflict suffering on animals for egotistic goals, then perhaps it is time to reconsider the political, ethical and religious *status quo*. We also ask, would those self-declared 'anarchist' champions of animal rights, who are at pains to distance their cause from the pioneering work of the Third Reich, care to point to any other system that has come as near to upholding the rights of animals as National Socialist Germany? We really have to wonder at the naiveté of those Left/anarchist activists of animal welfare who, whilst claiming to oppose the global explorative capitalist system, nevertheless regurgitate the decades of anti-Nazi propaganda spewed out by the capitalist propaganda mills.



*A contemporary drawing by Hans Frank showing the National Socialist idealisation of man and beast at work together.*

## FOOTNOTES

1. Robert N Proctor, professor of the history of science at Pennsylvania State University, *The Nazi War on Cancer*. Princeton University, 2001.
2. Dr Anna Bramwell, Oxford University, *Blood & Soil: Walther Darre and Hitler's Green Party*. Kensal Press, Britain, 1985.
3. *Reinventing biology*. Lynda Birke and Ruth Hubbard (ed). Indiana Uni. Press, 1995, quoting Arthur Arluke and Boria Sax, *The Nazi Treatment of Animals and People*.
4. Dr Krieger has been employed by the Animal Welfare Group, German Federal Ministry, Food and Agriculture, and is here quoted from the *International Symposium on the Symbiotic Relationship Between Humans and Animals*, Japan, 2002.
5. Savitri Devi, Graeco-English convert to Hinduism and a post-war National Socialist philosopher considered National Socialism to be the contemporary manifestation of cosmic law. She regarded Hinduism as the only living tradition of the ancient Aryan. In her book on animal rights she records the example of someone in Germany who was incarcerated in a concentration camp for three and a half years for the inhumane slaughter of a pig. Savitri Devi's 1959 book *Impeachment of Man* was a defence of animal rights that pre-empted today's radical animal rights activists. She regarded the "Aryan" or European folk as being uniquely close to animals as distinct in character from the treatment of animals in the lands of non-European folk.
6. Herman Goering, radio address, August 28, 1933.
7. From: *Die Weisse Fahne (The White Flag)* (1933).
8. Graf Ernst zu Reventlow had been leader of the *German People's Freedom Party*, a folk-nationalist party in North Germany entering into alliance with the National Socialists in 1924.
9. London *Daily Telegraph*. September 22nd, 2002.
10. David Irving. *Goering - A Biography*. Avon Books, NY, 1989. PP. 180-182.