To what extent did Germans benefit from Nazi rule in the 1930’s?
Effects on German people

- Economic policies
  - Treaty of Versailles
  - Social policies and standards of living
- Racial persecution
- German culture
- Women
Economic policies

• 1933 Jan German economy in ruins.
• 16 million unemployed
• Nazis plowed huge sums of public money into job creation schemes. E.g. road building.
• 1933-38 7000 km of autobahn built
• Forestry jobs
• Water projects
• Hospitals and schools built
• Labour Front had 44,500 paid officials by 1939
Treaty of Versailles & economic effects

• Rearmament programme began immediately
• 1933 100,000 in army compared to 1.4 million in 1939.
• Military equipment e.g. aircraft & tanks built en mass
• Remilitarisation effected other industries e.g. coal & chemical production doubled 1933-39.
• Oil, iron & steel trebled
• Iron ore mining increased by 500%
Reliable data?

- Huge fall in unemployment from 6 million to zero came from Nazi figures.
- Non Germans, Jews & women were not included in these figures.
Autarky

• Hitler aimed to make Germany self sufficient
• Couldn’t afford to import lots of raw materials
• Almost succeeded but still relied on Swedish iron ore imports & some food still imported.
• 4 year plan introduced in 1936 began to move Germany towards self sufficiency
• Only way Germany could truly achieve self sufficiency was to take over other countries to get the raw materials it needed = LEBENSRUAM
Social policies and standards of living

• Many believed Nazi rule improved lives.
• Unemployment fell
• Few were starving
• Wages increased slightly as did the working week
• Small businesses did well – large Jewish businesses had been closed down by Nazis reducing competition
• Other large businesses could make huge profits out of massive construction programme.
Conscription

- Not only in to army but from July 1935 all 18-25 year old men had to sign up for 6 months practical work.
- No wages paid, just pocket money.
- Not popular on whole but like by unemployed
Strength through Joy

- Part of German Labour Front
- Provided leisure activities to keep workers happy.
- Holidays, cruises, theatre trips, sporting events & weekend trips offered at reduced cost.
- Hitler wanted Germans to have their own cars = the Volkswagen ‘people’s car’ designed in 1938 but very few were made to demands of war production.
Public opinion

• Mid 1930’s many Germans pleased with Nazis policies.
• Unemployment falling
• National pride restored – Olympic Games
• Troops in Rhineland made Germans feel secure
• Anschluss in 1938 dramatically improved national pride.
Women

- Nazis had ‘traditional view of women’
- ‘Kinder, Kirche, Kuche (children, church and kitchen)
- Used propaganda to persuade women of role
- Pure Aryan race needed but birth rate falling
- Incentives to have more kids: interest free loans for newly weds if wife gave up work. Got to keep 25% on birth of each child.
- Hitler’s mothers birthday, yearly medal ceremony for mothers with most children
- Racially approved mother’s matched to SS men
- Women in responsible positions sacked e.g. 1000’s doctor's & civil servants
- Number of women teachers gradually reduced
- Dress code: hair in plaits or bun; not dyed or permed; no make-up or trousers
- Dieting discouraged
Downsides

• Priority to rearmament meant shortages of raw materials for house building.
• Young couples often struggled to afford their first house.
• Late 1930’s more women did paid work due to shortage of labour.
• Women who took the marriage loan after 1937 were allowed to work.
German Culture

• Restricted through censorship and propaganda
• Modern art = degenerate.
• Plays and films checked suitable for Nazis theme
• American music banned
• Work of Jewish writers banned
• Arts stifled
• Some scientists and artists emigrated
• E.g. Albert Einstein who helped develop the A-bomb for USA

• 1933 benefits appeared to outweigh disadvantages
• Living standards recovered
• National pride increased
• Many workers (including ex communist supporters) were doing well as long as they followed Nazis rules
• Negatives: only became more obvious once Nazis achieved totalitarian control
Racial persecution

• Jews seen as inferior
• 500,000 Jews in Germany in 1933 less than 1% of population.
• Many in important positions & jobs e.g. bankers, lawyers & Dr.s made Hitler think Jews were in control
Action

- April ‘33 1 day boycott of shops
- 1934 increased anti Jewish propaganda
- Sept 1935 Nuremberg Laws:
  a) Banned marriages between Jews and Germans
  b) Took away German citizenship and rights of Jews
  c) 1936 Olympics – lull on persecution
  d) Sept 1937 – many Jewish businesses seized
  e) June 1938 – Jewish Dr, dentists and lawyers not allowed to treat Aryans
  f) October 1938 – Jews had J printed in passport
  g) Nov 1938 Kristallnacht
Krystalnacht

- French Jew shot German minister in Paris
- 8,000 Jewish shops, homes & synagogues attacked
- 100 Jews killed
- 20,000 sent to concentration camps
- Jews fined for damage to German property 1 billion marks
- 1939 Jews officially encouraged to emigrate
- 1939 30,000 Jewish men and boys sent to concentration camps
‘undesirable groups’

• Gypsies
• Tramps
• Beggars all sent to concentration camps
• Physical & mental disabilities – 1933 compulsory sterilisation (epileptics, blind, deaf, depressed etc…)
• Euthanasia ‘mercy killing’ by lethal injection caused an outcry when it was first introduced.