

# THE HITLER YOUTH MOVEMENT

## NAZI PARTY

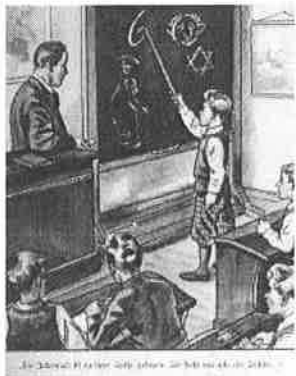
In the 1920s, the Nazi Party started targeting German youth for its propaganda messages. Propaganda is spreading information to support a cause. The Nazis stressed that the Nazi Party was a movement of youth. There were millions of young Germans who were won over by Nazism in the classroom and through extracurricular activities. The Hitler Youth was an extension of Hitler's belief that the future of Nazi Germany lay within its children. To the Nazis, it was as important to a child as school.



Hitler made it clear what he expected from German children. He said, "The weak must be chiseled away. I want young men and women who can suffer pain. A young German must be as swift as a greyhound, as tough as leather, and as hard as Krupp's steel."

## YOUTH MOVEMENTS

During the 1920s, movements for young people were part of German culture and the Hitler Youth was created. Its membership stood at 100,000 by 1933. Once Hitler came to power, all other youth movements were ended. By 1936, the group had 4 million members. It had become all but compulsory, or required, to join the Hitler Youth. If youths paid their subscription, they could avoid active service at first. However, by 1939 that was impossible. Membership of the Hitler Youth grew.



## EDUCATION

Nazi education served to indoctrinate, or brainwash, students with the Nazi view. Educators glorified "Aryan" races, while degrading Jews and other so-called inferior groups. The Nazi regime removed public school systems teachers who were considered Jews or "politically unreliable." Most educators remained in position and joined the Nationalist Socialist Teachers League. 97 percent of teachers joined the League by 1936. Teachers actually joined the Nazi Party in greater numbers than any other profession.

## CURRICULUM

From their first days in school, German children were inundated with Hitler and his beliefs. His portrait hung in classrooms and textbooks described the thrill children seeing him for the first time. Board games and toys were used to spread racial and political propaganda to German youth and brainwashed children into militarism. Instruction aimed to produce race-conscious, obedient, self-sacrificing Germans who were willing to die for the Hitler and Germany. Devotion to Hitler was a key part to the Hitler Youth training. Hitler's birthday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, was celebrated as a national holiday. German teenagers swore allegiance to Hitler and pledged to serve Germany and Hitler as future soldiers. Schools were important to spread Nazi ideas to German youth. Some books were removed from the classroom, and German educators introduced books that taught Nazi principles.

## ORGANIZATIONS

The Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls were the main tools used by Nazis to influence the beliefs, thinking, and actions of German youth. Leaders used tightly controlled group activities and staged propaganda events like mass rallies full of ritual and spectacle to create an illusion of a national community reaching across the class and religious divisions characterizing Germany prior to 1933.

### BOYS



The Hitler Youth focused on ages 10-18 years old. There were separate organizations for boys and girls. Boys groups prepared them to become soldiers, while girls' organizations prepared them for motherhood. The groups wore uniforms of black pants and a brown shirt with the swastika symbol. They were awarded a little dagger with the inscription, "Blood and Honor." Members were required to memorize a poem praising Hitler and a prayer

addressed to "Mein Fuhrer" (my leader). At age 10, German boys joined the German Young People and stayed in that group until age 13. Then they transferred to the Hitler Youth, until they were 18. It was founded in 1926 with the purpose of training boys to enter the SA (Storm Troopers), a Nazi paramilitary group. Youth leaders wanted to mix boys into the Nazi community to prepare them for their service as soldiers, or the SS. They took part in military athletics, such as marching, bayonet drills, grenade throwing, trench digging, map reading, gas defense, and shooting guns.

### GIRLS

German girls joined the League of Young Girls at age 10 until they were 14. Then they transferred to the League of German Girls. This group emphasized collective athletics, like rhythmic gymnastics. German health authorities felt this was less strenuous to the female body and better preparation for motherhood, Hitler's main goal for girls.



### MEMBERSHIP

Membership in Nazi youth groups became mandatory for all boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 17 in 1936. After-school meetings and weekend camping trips were sponsored by the organizations to train children to be faithful to the Nazi Party. Over 765,000 young people served in leadership roles in Nazi youth organizations by 1939, preparing them for the military. The Hitler Youth seemed to personify German discipline to outsiders, but this image was far from accurate. Boys and girls were so tired from attending meetings, they were hardly able to stay awake at school.

### MILITARY SERVICE

Boys were required to enlist in the armed forces or Reich Labor Service at age 18. Their activities in the Hitler Youth prepared them for these roles. In 1944, the Nazi regime recruited youths under sixteen to defend the Reich alongside with seniors of sixty. Germany surrendered in 1945, but some German boys continued to fight in guerilla groups, known as "Werewolves." After the war, the Allies required young Germans to undergo a "de-Nazification" process. German children should have been able to trust adults, but instead they taught them hate. The youth had no way of truly understanding what Hitler and the Nazis really stood for.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**IDENTIFY:** Use the word bank to identify each description.

Aryan	Jewish	Storm Troopers
Hitler	Hitler Youth	propaganda
Werewolves	"de-Nazification"	teachers

1.	Hitler removed teachers of this faith from German schools
2.	Biased information presented to sway opinions
3.	Dictator of Germany during World War II; used propaganda to promote self
4.	This organization was catered to boys ages 10-18
5.	German boys who continued to fight even after Germany surrendered
6.	Race promoted and desired by Hitler and his youth organizations
7.	German boys were trained to join this paramilitary organization
8.	Process performed by Allies on young Germans after World War II
9.	This profession joined the Nazi Party more than any other profession

**MULTIPLE CHOICE :** Choose the best answer.

10. What is the most likely reason Hitler targeted German youth?
- A. He thought they needed to be stronger.
  - B. He knew they were the most impressionable.
  - C. He wanted them to compete with other nations.
  - D. He wanted them to be strong adults.

11. Which best describes how Hitler wanted the German youth?

- A. Thoughtful
- B. Smart
- C. Superior
- D. Kind



12. Which best describes membership into Hitler's youth organizations?

- A. They were mandatory for boys and girls of a particular age.
- B. Children could decide whether they wanted to join or not.
- C. Children did not participate in many programs with the Hitler Youth.
- D. Children only participated in the programs while in school.

13. What happened once boys reached 18 years old?

- A. They were allowed to decide whether they went into the military.
- B. They were required to enlist immediately in the armed forces or Reich Labor Service.
- C. They began going to universities in Germany.
- D. They were forced to marry and start a family.

14. Why did the League of German Girls mainly emphasize collective athletics?

- A. They wanted the girls to learn to work together.
- B. They wanted the Germans to be the best in the world.
- C. They wanted to prepare their bodies for motherhood.
- D. They wanted to them to become stronger.

15. With which statement would the author **mostly** agree?

- A. The Hitler Youth were fortunate to participate in great organizations.
- B. The Hitler Youth made Germans far superior than other nations.
- C. The Hitler Youth programs were a positive experience for children.
- D. The Hitler Youth programs brainwashed German children.

16. "From their first days in school, German children were inundated with Hitler and his beliefs." What is the best meaning of inundated in the previous quote?

- A. Given
- B. Flooded
- C. Questioned
- D. Challenged