

The Nazi Youth



Hitler was quite confident that the children and youth of Germany could be won over for all time to National Socialism, and through them a new order would be obtained. This process was to take place mainly through education and involvement with the Hitler Youth Movement.

“In my great educative work,” said Hitler, “I am beginning with the young. We older ones are used up ... We have no unrestrained instincts left. We are cowardly and sentimental ...

“...I intend to have an athletic youth ... In this way I shall eradicate the thousands of years of human domestication. Then I shall have in front of me the pure and noble natural material. With that I can create the new order.” *Hitler Speaks* by Hermann Rauschning, 1939.

Why were the young so important to Hitler?

All young people were supposed to join a Nazi Youth Movement. Other youth movements, such as the Scouts and Guides, were banned. Hitler's organizations taught them loyalty and military skills.

Age	Boys	Girls
6–10	The Pimpfen (Little Fellows)	–
10–14	The Jungvolk (The Young Folk)	The Jungmadel (Young Girls)
14–18	The Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth)	The Bund Deutsche Mädchen (The German Girls' League)



Hitler didn't always get his own way. Sometimes groups of Hitler Youth patrols were beaten up as they marched through the countryside by gangs of rebellious teenagers known as 'Edelweiss Pirates'.



Every year, Hitler Youth Members had to go to training camps where they learned how to read maps, were taught Nazi ideas and did gymnastics and sports.

Each youth had a 'performance book' in which their marks for camping, athletics and fighting were recorded. Those who had the best marks were sent to special schools where they were trained to be the leaders of the future. At these elite training schools for young men, students were awoken in the middle of the night to do open air PE exercises in winter, and played war games with live ammunition.



Even training in the youth camps was taken to extremes. A 14-year-old sentry guarding one camp shot a 10-year-old boy who couldn't remember the password.

Boys began with 12-mile marches and later walked up to 50 miles. A doctor confided "...that often after one of these lengthy marches [I] had as many as 30 boys in hospital".

What does this tell you about Hitler's plans for the future?



The BDM (League of German Maidens) was set up in 1930. Many girls were attracted to the BDM as it allowed them to escape from their often tedious home lives, where they were under constant scrutiny from their parents. They were given opportunities to go away on hikes and camping trips and take part in group activities.

Margarete Hannsmann enjoyed it as it meant that “girls did what hitherto only boys were allowed to do...”



Melita Maschmann described how she wished to escape from her “...childish, narrow life ... to follow a different road from the conservative one prescribed ... by family tradition...” Many of her contemporaries joined the BDM for similar reasons.

However, although the Nazi regime claimed that youth autonomy and the principle of self-leadership were essential, in practise, independence was not valued. The BDM was a community into which individuality was dissolved.

Explain why girls joined the BDM. Was it all as it seemed?



The Nazis were obsessed with uniformity. All Youth Movements had a set of clothes their member were expected to wear.

To be a member of the BDM you had to be of German origin, physically fit, clean and dressed in an orderly manner.

BDM training included health and hygiene, sexual attitudes, dress codes and physical fitness.

“A girl’s body no longer remained in the private sphere, but was subordinated to the national interest”. L Pine, 1999.



The idea was that fit girls would develop into healthy women and so create a healthy next generation. The BDM motto for 1939 was: “You have a duty to be healthy”.

Sport was considered an essential element in maintaining health. The BDM broke down old taboos that girls should not take part in sporting events in public by organizing sports festivals.



Despite frequent jokes about the morality of the BDM, its primary aim was not to encourage a child at any price, but to promote motherhood within marriage. Sex was reduced to its biological function of reproduction in the interests of preserving the race and the nation.

Lust and desire were unacceptable, and this was partly why so much emphasis was put on physical exercise.



Despite these ideals, sex was not fully explained and this led to girls having relationships with SS men in order to present the Führer with children. Consequently, the initials of the BDM were played with to give the organization some different names:

Bald Deutscher Mütter (German Mothers to Be) and Bund Deutscher Milchkuhe (League of German Milk Cows), were just two.

What do these jokes suggest to you about the morality of the organization?



Sport was seen as essential in Nazi Germany. It helped develop strong Germans, who were needed for the new order. Athletics and gymnastics were undertaken by all.

“Sport exists to make a person strong, agile and bold. It also toughens him up and teaches him to bear hardship.”
Hitler.



Special training manuals were produced. No free or spontaneous sport or dance was allowed as this went against the Nazi sense of order.

“The weak must be chiselled away. I want young men and women who can suffer pain. A young German must be swift as a greyhound, as tough as leather, and as hard as Krupp’s steel.” Hitler.

Why do you think Hitler was so obsessed with having a strong, fit, athletic German youth? Do you think sport was enjoyable?



“The whole function of education is to create Nazis” B
Rust, 1938.

Read the sources below and on the next two slides and see if you agree with this quote. Explain your answer.

“...No boy or girl must leave school without having attained a clear insight into the meaning of racial purity and the importance of maintaining the racial blood...” Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 1939.

“Military education is not a special part of a general comprehensive education, but the centre of all our obligations as educationalists.” from ‘The German School’, a publication for teachers, 1937.



Here is a maths problem from a Nazi text book:

“A Sturmkampfflieger on take-off carries 12 dozen bombs, each weighing 10 kilos. The aircraft makes for Warsaw, the centre of international Jewry. It bombs the town. On take off with all the bombs ... and a fuel tank containing 1,500 kilos of fuel, the aircraft weighed ... 8000 kilos. When it returns from the crusade, there are still 230 kilos of fuel left. What is the weight of the aircraft when empty?”

“Our State’, said Dr Ley...’is an educational State ... We begin with the child when he is three years’ old. As soon as he begins to think he is made to carry a little flag. Then follows school, the Hitler Youth...” A Wolf, 1944.



“All subjects – German Language, History, Geography, Chemistry and Mathematics – must concentrate on military subjects – the glorification of military service and of German heroes and leaders and the strength of a regenerated Germany...” Angriff, 1939.

School assignments based on the recognition of races:

“Observe the Jew: his way of walking, his bearing, gestures, and movements when talking.”

“In what stories, descriptions, and poems do you find the physical character of the Jew pertinently portrayed?”
J Graf, 1935.



The Nazis added boarding schools to the school system. There were three main types. The first was the National Political Educational Institutions (NPEA), and by 1943 there were 37. They were supervised by the Reich Minister of Education. Life in these schools was hard and militaristic. They had indirect associations with the SS and were for children over the age of 10. Fees varied depending on the means of the parents.

The second set of boarding schools were the Adolf Hitler Schools, and there were 10 of these by 1943. They were actually organized and maintained by the party and offered free education for those over 12. Their function was to train a highly indoctrinated elite of leaders capable of serving the state.



The third type were the German State Boarding Schools, introduced in 1941. There were 66 by 1942. They were for children of parents whose life was disorganized by the war. Priority was given to children whose fathers had died on national service.

What does this tell you about the role of education in Germany?

