

The nazi elite schools successful history essay



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The subject of World War II and Hitler both fascinates and horrifies, and is probably one of the most studied. It is a very important and emotional part of European history, which is often looked at from the other side. It is therefore interesting to see how the children inside Germany were doing, and how they were being indoctrinated to believe in the Nazi regime.

‡ ±€ Clearly states the research question that was investigated

‡ ±€ Clearly states how the investigation was undertaken

‡ ±€ Clearly states the conclusions of the essay

‡ ±€ Is within the word limit

Start with your thesis- what is the topic, and what position are you going to take on it? Then decide what evidence you need to support your thesis and look it up. Your thesis needs to be something that can be argued- ask yourself if someone could take the opposite point of view.

Motivation

Why should the reader care about the topic of your EE and the results/conclusions you found?

Problem statement

What problem are you trying to solve?

Approach

How did you go about solving the problem or answering the question?

What is the extent of your work? Did you compare/contrast the work of two historians or authors or genre? Did you use particular methodologies or variables?

If the abstract describes a science experiment don't forget to include a brief description of the design of the experiment; the hypothesis it will test and what literature are you drawing on?

Results

What's the answer?

Conclusions

What are the implications of your answer/result?

1st Paragraph

·€ 75 to 100 words in length

·€ Must include the Research Question & Thesis

·€ Must outline the purpose and method of the paper

2nd Paragraph

·€ 100 to 125 words in length

·€ Cover the scope of the investigation

·€ Detail limits and boundaries of your research

·€ What are you going to prove in your EE

·€ Outline key resources consulted

3rd Paragraph

·€ 50 to 75 words

·€ Outline the conclusion reached in your EE

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Introduction

During the Nazi regime's rise to power Germany's youth took a high priority. Adolf Hitler knew that the Party could only thrive with the full support of future generations, and thus started youth movements (Hitler Jugend/Hitler Youth, Bund deutscher Mädel/League of German Girls), to influence the German children. To ensure that they were completely indoctrinated he also put a lot of thought into the education system and its reformed curriculum. The Nazi ideology was given a lot of emphasis, and the students came to accept and support National Socialism. Racial education was included in almost every subject, and there was put a lot more weight on physical

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education. Boys were trained to be soldiers and girls for motherhood; academic subjects were not given first priority.

In addition to revamping the traditional German school system, the Nazi party decided there was a need to establish new secondary schools for the most promising of German youth where they could have extensive control of the education and socialization processes of the pupils. These schools produced thousands of young Germans deeply imbued with Nazi ideology. Whilst the Hitler Youth organisations targeted everyone, these schools were to create an elite.

Hitler's youth policy is an extensive topic, so in this essay the focus will be on the education system; in particular the elite schools designed to educate the future top-ranking government and army personnel.

Although Hitler committed suicide and the Nazi Party collapsed, and it would thus not be possible to estimate the result of such a well-trained elite in practise, it is an interesting topic to study. How easy is it to brainwash an entire generation, and what effect could it have had if Hitler was allowed to continue his rule? It is important that the world remains vigilant at all times, to possibly recognize the signs and prevent a similar situation from arising. It is also useful to look at the institutions where the 'ideal National Socialist man and leader' was moulded when trying to understand the Nazi systems' ambitions. (Pine)

This raises the question, to what extent were the Nazi elite schools successful?

These school systems were successfully and to a large extent used by the Nazi party to engineer an elite of German youth, who inherited all desired qualities, to take over important positions within the army and the Party. They were of Aryan race, well trained, obedient, committed to the Party, trained for battle, and overall had the right mind-set to become a great Nazis of the Thousand Year Reich.

The Educational Structure established by the Nazis

Hitler and the Nazi Party established boarding schools for the very best of German Youth, giving them extensive control over their education and socialization processes, and the opportunity to train them specifically for important positions within the Party and the army. They were to be an addition to the traditional German schooling system, run by the Party itself, to create the new ideal National Socialist man and leader.

Three main types of educational institutions, established to train the young were the Napolas (National Political Institutes of Education), the Ordensburgen (Order Castles) and the Adolf Hitler schools. The regime itself referred to these schools as Ausleseschulen (selection schools), and not as elite schools. This essentially meant that they selected a certain type of pupil, who they thought would be fit to become a part of the future elite leadership. Although the Nazi regime aimed to remove the class system in Germany, the concept of elitism was essential to how they wanted to reorganize German society. Instead of a classless society, they started a new structure where race and fitness were the most important.

The National Political Institutes of Education (Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten), commonly referred to as Napola, were one of the secondary boarding school types in Hitler's Germany. The first three Napola schools, founded in 1933 by Bernhard Rust, the Minister of Education in the Nazi Party responded directly to him. In 1936 the control of the Napolas were given to SS, and teachers were pressured to join the organization. At one point they considered to introduce ranks and uniforms alike to those in the SS among the teachers and pupils. By the end of the war there were 43 Napola schools, of which three were for girls.

To be accepted into the schools, the students had to go through various thorough examinations where their craniums would be measured and they would be examined for 'good racial qualities'. Only 'racially pure' boys would measure up to the standards of the new German Herrenmensch and would be brought up as members of the 'master-race'. Pupils of the elite school must be 'predominantly Nordic', but 'Falic' or 'West Germanic' were acceptable. Hans Muncheberg, a former pupil at the Napola in Potsdam declared " that's how we were graded: either as Nordic, Falic, Dinaric, West Germanic or Balto-Slavic" (Knopp 117). According to Muncheberg, the " crazy theories of race" and the desired image, were not actually followed as closely as it would appear. Out of 400 children in his school, only eight were accepted as 'Nordic-Falic', with the rest being a " racial mishmash" and only one student who had to leave. In addition to academic qualifications, political attitude and personal capacity for achievement, it was the criteria of physical heredity that decided who would benefit from an education which promised a great future in the Third Reich. Barely older than 12, they had the prospect

of one day being the 'new generation of leaders' who would rule the Third Reich.

The Adolf Hitler Schools (Adolf Hitler Schulen) were run by the Hitler Youth Organization. After SS took control over the Napolas, Hitler allowed his name to be attached to these schools in 1937. The Napolas and the Adolf Hitler Schools were for the same age group (11-18), whilst the Ordensburgen catered for university aged students.

The Ordensburgen targeted students at university level, and offered four-year courses. Robert Ley, who stated that the school and its curriculum offered 'four years of the hardest possible physical and mental exertions', was in charge of them. (Pine 86) It turned out, however, that the focus on academia was rather scarce, whilst physical training was prioritized.

There was disagreement within the Party as to how these institutions were to be run and who was to lead them. The Hitlerjugend, the army, SS and other organizations all fought to use the schools for recruitment.

There were always contradictions in the schools; they appeared to be intended to turn children into critical, well-educated and cosmopolitan leaders, but they nevertheless had to swear unquestioning obedience, sacrifice and loyalty to Hitler until death. " We were supposed to be loyal followers of the Fuhrer and convinced National Socialists', says Hans-Gunther Zempelin, a former pupil of the Oranienstein Napola School. " We were expected to be capable of independent thought, to have a will of our own, to command respect and be able to make decisions for ourselves. The two

things clearly didn't go together. You cannot be a convinced National Socialist, loyal to the Fuhrer and think critically" (Knopp 118).

The goal of the elite schools was to create a new generation of ideal National Socialist men and leaders to take on positions within the Party and the army. Klaus Heue, a former Adolf Hitler School pupil said, " the job waiting for us was simply to be a Gauleiter in Siberia. That was drummed into us." (Knopp 114) These schools were meant to be the German equivalent of Harvard or Cambridge, yet they were never more than indoctrination centres for political hard-liners; cadets with dreams of great careers. They were to meet Hitler's ideal of a ruthlessly aggressive young generation: dominating pitilessly and filled with hate for anything that was not considered German.

Daily life in the Nazi elite schools and pupils' reminiscences thereof

The aim of the elite schools were to raise a generation for elite positions within political, military and administrative leadership of the Nazi state, and it tried to complete it through having a military discipline, tough physical requirements and by creating a feeling of superiority and pride.

Although claiming to be a meritocracy, the elite schools only accepted racially flawless pupils. Not even children with poor vision or hearing were accepted. To ensure that all students were of above-average intelligence they had to go through the previously mentioned rigorous entrance exams.

Life in boys' Napolas was frequently brutal and very competitive.

Approximately 20% of all cadets were either sent home because of injuries due to training accidents or simply not capable of pursuing the curriculum. A

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Napola cadet, ranked "Jungmann" was typically 11-18 years old. Although they did experience hardship, most of the students had an unfaltering belief in the Endsieg (Final Victory), and the National socialist worldview. This can be explained by the gratitude, respect and pride the pupils felt towards the Fuhrer and the Party, for giving them this opportunity.

In Mein Kampf Hitler had already made it clear that a militaristic and militant form of education would be the norm for all German schools after the Nazis seized power. The schools were brutal, and 'survival of the fittest' was practised. This attitude is supported by, for example, Heinrich Himmler's statement in 1944, when he said; " anything that is weak and not strong enough is choked off and dies. It is killed, mercilessly and pitilessly, and that is the best thing for it. That is how the good lord has arranged Nature."

(Knopp 115)

The brutality of the military regime in the schools was a lot to handle for students, and many found the experience of their schooling traumatic. Hans Muncheberg, a former pupil of the Napola school in Potsdam, said; " if anyone showed weakness he was considered a wet, a weakling, a coward, a disgrace to the whole platoon or the whole company" (Knopp 115). Public yelling and punishment was used to scare pupils and create respect for the leaders.

The schools imprinted obedience and loyalty into their students. Uwe Lamprecht, former pupil of the Napola school in Plon said; " the first thing we had to learn was obedience. The thought behind it was: only someone who was learnt to obey orders knows how to give them. (Knopp 114) To do this,

they often used bullying and punishments. In addition to scaring their students to obey and behave, they tried to achieve admiration and a feeling of loyalty and belonging. Theo Sommer, a former Adolf Hitler School boy, said; " we kept seeing these photos showing Hitler bending over a little Pimpf, the great man stoking the boy's cheek or putting a hand on his shoulder. We wanted him to do that to us. After all, we were boys of the Adolf Hitler School. We bore his name." (Knopp 114). As seen above, Hitler was successful in creating an environment where hero-worshipping of him was a visible effect. It can easily be argued that the students were been brainwashed into admiration of Hitler and the party, whom they then desperately wanted the approval of. Hans Buchholz, a former pupil of the Napola school in Naumburg confirms this theory of brainwash when he said; " our thinking was totally shaped in one direction: You are nothing, your Volk is everything. Germany must live, even if we have to die. 'Deutschland, thou shalt stand and shine, though we may be destroyed.'" (Knopp 114)

Harald Scholtz, another former Adolf Hitler School pupil, said " through the exaggerated importance placed on physical education, the Adolf Hitler Schools fulfilled the expectation which the regime placed on them: to produce combat-ready, performance-minded managers of power, but ones who would follow instructions in times of conflict!" (Knopp 113) The physical education was incredibly tough, and like Scholtz says, used to prepare able soldiers for the war and military positions. Bernhard Rust, the Reich Minister of Education, said in 1935 that " the fact that physical education is given the highest priority needs no explanation. The fine and healthy bodies of the Nordic race and its steel-hard will are the models we aspire to. (Knopp 115)

Unfortunately, the high focus on sports, military training and physical shape meant less of a focus on academia.

Unfortunately, the high focus on sports, military training and physical shape meant less of a focus on academic subjects. Harald Grundmann, another former Adolf Hitler school boy, said; " I am ashamed how little we knew about German poets and men of letters - from Thomas Mann to Gottfried Benn; how scanty our knowledge of mathematics was. So in the intellectual area our qualifications were pretty miserable." (Knopp 115) The student's academic education was not prioritized, and so although the schools claimed to offer a high quality education, this seems to have rarely been the case in the Adolf Hitler Schools and the Ordensburgen.

In the Ordensburgen, Robert Ley had clearly established that the main aims of the education at the elite schools were to " test the initiative, courage and daring of a man and to promote these qualities where they exist", that " anybody wanting to govern over others must be able to rule himself" and that they wanted to know whether the men were " fired by an overweening ambition to become leaders of men, to dominate, to become masterful" (Pine 86). These statements bear a strong connotation to Nietzsche's ideas of the *Übermensch* and the 'will to power', which Hitler was strongly influenced by. Although Ley had also promised 'the hardest possible' mental exertions, the Ordensburgen students, called Junkers, got little academic education.

Indoctrination and sports were clearly the focus, and they rarely had more than one hour of academic subjects each day, sometimes as rarely as every second or third day. Many party leaders noted that a number of Junkers struggled with digesting lectures with spiritual and intellectual content, and

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that they had problems with remembering and understanding them, and then seeing connections to the previous lectures.

The Napolas, established in 1933, and then the Adolf Hitler schools, established in 1937, were more serious. The latter were under control of the Nazi party, and just like the Ordensburgen, academically weak and not much else than a controlled recruitment source for the SS. The Napolas however, were different. They were traditional, military based boarding schools, and education received greater prominence.

Consequences

As established earlier, the main goal of the elite schools was to create a new generation of suited leaders within political, military and administrative positions in the Nazi state, with the desired qualities and unquestioning loyalty to the party. A lot of resources went into the moulding of these young boys, and although the Third Reich fell, many of the students did in fact obtain high positions in society.

The elite schools were to a large extent used as a source of recruitment for the Nazi Party and the SS, and that is the reason for their specialized curriculum. And, as intended, there were a substantial number of students from the elite schools who entered into important Nazi positions. In the Napolas, 13% of Jungmannen entered the SS, compared to just 1.8% of the general German population. This suggests that the education was indeed successful in obtaining its goal, and that the result of the curriculum and militant schooling turned the students into the leaders the state wanted.

There was a lot of military training at the elite schools to prepare the students for war, and tall of the pupils were in superb physical shape. Eventually, as the Nazis and Hitler became desperate, many of the students were utilized as child soldiers in the war, and many were killed in the last months of the war. Since so many elite school students were sent to the front and killed at the end of the war, not all of the students got a chance to try to find their footing in the new society. However, it turns out that many of the students who survived the war were successful.

As a result of their focused education, the students were incredibly loyal to the Nazi cause, and some gladly sacrificed themselves to the war cause. Harald Scholtz, an Adolf Hitler student at only 15 years old, said; " we would never have surrendered. We would rather have got ourselves shot" (Knopp 167) Especially the students at Ordensburg, felt bound to sacrifice their lives in the final conflict, like " knights facing death and the Devil" (Knopp 167). Children as young as 14 fought in the war, glad to have got a chance to prove themselves and their devotion to the Führer. The years of brainwashing, the ideological polish and the drill had left their mark. For years many found it difficult to shake off the illusions and legends on which their education was based. Half of all the schoolboy elite died " the hero's death" as they believed, seduced and blinded by the inhumane educational system.

Nevertheless, many of the former elite students still stress the advantage of their education. Life after fall of Third Reich was good for many of them. The ones who survived the war often ended up in good positions in society, because of their background education at the elite schools. This despite the

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fact that their education was mostly centred on loyalty to the Nazi party and military training, and not academia. Hans-Gunther Zempelin believes that: "we were well educated for a wretched cause". (Knopp 170) Uwe Lamprecht from the Plon Napola said that: "In that criminal age of blood, death and havoc, it was as if I were living on an island. I was protected. I had plenty to eat. I didn't have to hang around on the streets." (Knopp 170) He had lived a comfortable life at the Napola, and later became a successful doctor. He says his education has helped him "get through life pretty well" (Knopp 170). An amazing number of students have gone remarkably far in life, and have done so through discipline, toughness and stamina; qualities they were taught at the elite schools. As for the Nazi ideology, most of the pupils seem to have distanced themselves from it after the war. It is likely same as everyone else, shaaame

Many still struggle with the traumas of the experience they had, but optimism is also a trend. Hardy Kruger said "What has grown with me since those days is an incredible, almost exaggerated urge for justice, a tolerance towards unorthodox thinking, towards every religion, which is often hard to explain to many people. What has happened is the opposite of what they tried to teach me" (Knopp 170) about his days at an Adolf Hitler School. Hans-Gunther Zempelin, who ended at the top of a mammoth corporation, says he is left with "the memory of many fine and likeable young people, whose lives ended at the age of eighteen or nineteen. They were the sacrificial victims of a criminal regime. (Knopp 170)

Had Hitler's Reich lasted a few years longer, the first of the elite graduates would have reached positions of power. The students had been trained from <https://assignbuster.com/the-nazi-elite-schools-successful-history-essay/>

a young age only how to serve their Fuhrer and annihilate their enemies, and it is likely they could have greatly participated to Hitler's war effort. Albert Speer exclaimed after the war that " after one generation at the most, the old stratum of leaders would have been replaced by a type of man who had been educated according to new principles, at the Adolf Hitler Schools and the Ordensburgen, and who even in Party circles would at times be regarded as too ruthless and arrogant" (Knopp 119), supporting how dangerous this would have been.

Conclusion

The Napola system was used to produce all-round great and obedient Nazis. Military training, fitness, ideology, being politically engaged, the feeling of superiority and loyalty to the state were all important factors.

Hitler definitely had political shrewdness, and understood how the youth was crucial for the party's future generations. His schools ended up like he wanted them to, and the students were incredibly loyal to him.

Many of the students ended up in good positions and were thankful for their education at the elite schools, but many were also killed in war or traumatized.

It is fortunate that never got to see the effect of such a generation of trained men, but it shows how important it is for leaders to influence the youth from an early age if they want to continue their regime.

The Adolf Hitler School, the Napola and the Ordensburgen systems were used to a large extent in addition to the traditional German school and extra

curriculum activities like the Hitlerjugend to mould an elite of German youth in the Third Reich.

An effective conclusion is clearly stated

Conclusion is relevant to the research question and consistent with the evidence presented in the essay

Where appropriate to the subject concerned, the conclusion includes unresolved questions