

# Education and the youth movement in nazi germany



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One of Hitler's biggest dreams as leader of the Nazi Party and Germany from 1933-45 was to create a "Thousand Year Reich" a Nazi German empire that would last forever. To do this Hitler needed to mould the children of Germany to serve him and the Nazi ideals. This plan was carried out by Hitler in many ways, foremost in the picture are the changes made to education system and the introduction of youth organisations such as The HitlerJugend (Hitler Youth) and the Bund Deutsche Mädel (League of German Girls).

As soon as Hitler gained power in 1933, he began to implement his plans for winning over the youth of Germany. He appointed a man named Bernhard Rust as the minister for education. Rust was very loyal to Hitler and the Nazi party and played an integral role in the changes that took place in the German education system. His background was dubious; he had not been previously working as a teacher after being fired for having a somewhat suspicious relationship with a female pupil.

Rust's main objective was to limit the amount of opposition to Nazi ideas in the country's schools. Teachers were forced to join the German Teacher's League and those that refused were fired. Those that were willing were sent to be trained in the belief and teaching of Nazi principals. Those that were openly opposed to the Nazi's ideas were sacked of course. Furthermore, the party had to approve any textbook that might be used in German schools to make sure no anti-Nazi ideas slipped through the net and reached the German children.

Most importantly, perhaps, Rust introduced an all-new and improved Nazi-friendly National Curriculum. A lot of time was spent on physical education to

ensure that the SS members of tomorrow were fit and able. Also, a strong emphasis on history was made although the lessons always had a slight lean towards the teachings of the failures of the Weimar Republic, The November Criminals etc. etc.

Also introduced were courses on Eugenics, the science of selective breeding, Nazi philosophies and the party's origin and racial science including the supremacy of the Aryan or Nordic Race. Evidence of this can be found in your textbooks on page 210? Where a picture is shown of a timetable for a German Girl's school.

One of the books used to study racial science in Nazi Germany was Heredity and Racial Biology for Students by Jakob Graf. Here is an extract: The Aryans (Nordic people) were tall, light-skinned, light-eyed, blond people. The Goths, Franks, Vandals, and Normans, too, were peoples of Nordic blood. It was Nordic energy and boldness that were responsible for the power and prestige enjoyed by small nations such as the Netherlands and Sweden. Everywhere Nordic creative power has built up mighty empires with high-minded ideas, and to this very day Aryan languages and cultural values are spread over a large part of the world.

Obviously there were certain flaws in this ideal as are shown in the picture you can hand round.

In 1926, the first group of young members of the NSDAP (Nazi) was set up by Kurt Gruber. Rudolf Hess suggested the name of Hitler youth and it stuck, later on, he also transferred the leadership of the HJ to Franz Von Pfeffer of the SA. His main aim was to train up future members of the SA for fighting <https://assignbuster.com/education-and-the-youth-movement-in-nazi-germany/>

left wing groups. He was replaced by Ernst Rhoem in 1930 but after Rhoem's death in the Night of the Long Knives, Baldur Von Schirach took over. By 1936, all boys aged 15-18 were obliged to join the HJ and all other youth organisations were banned.

The HJ was a very large organisation; in 1938 there were over 728, 000 full and part-time HJ leaders. For younger boys aged 10-14, the Jungvolk were set up the boys had to learn scout-type skills such as semaphore and had to go on two-day hikes. They were also forced to listen to hours of Nazi preaching. The aim of this organisation was to breed loyal Nazis for Hitler.

However, boys did not have the monopoly on Nazi youth organisations, for girls aged 10 and up there was the Jungmädel and at 14 they got to join the Bund Deutsche Mädel. They had to perform a year of service on a farm. The overall leader of the organisation was Gertrude Scholtz-Klink, a rather large and overbearing woman. The girls were also taught the Nazi ideals and were supposedly prepared for motherhood.

During the war, the boys in the Hitler youth were involved heavily in air defence. As Germany began to run out of willing and healthy soldiers, HJ members were encouraged to join the 12th SS Panzer Division, commanded by the Reich's youngest general, Kurt Meyer. As The end of the war neared and Germany's desperation grew, finally members of the HJ were armed and instructed by their leaders to " fight to the death".