

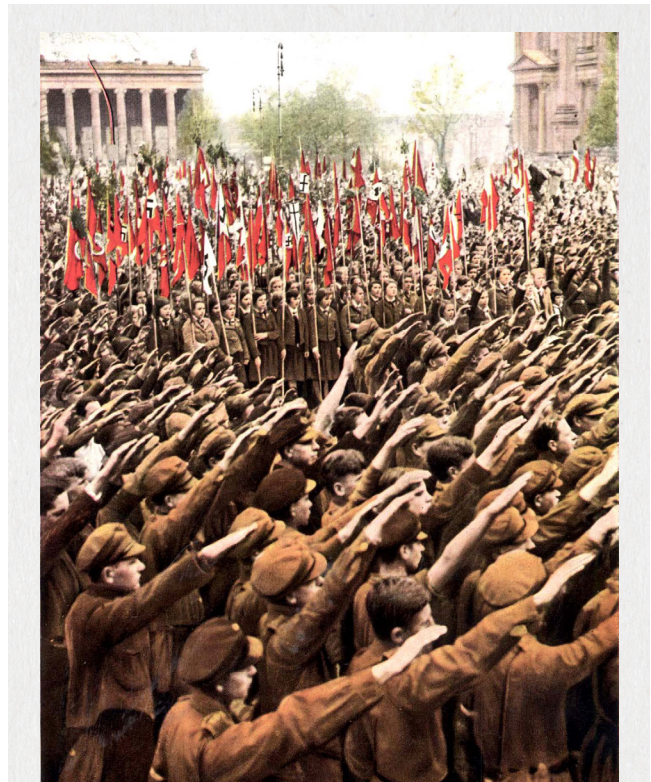
Adolf Hitler Boys' Storm Troop, a branch of the Storm Troopers, was established in 1922 with just over 1,000 boys. In 1926 it changed its name to Hitlerjugend or Hitler Youth. The movement first admitted girls into a separate organization in 1928; it eventually became the League of German Girls (Bund Deutscher Mädel, BDM).

The movement's purpose was to shape the young generation, the group that would ensure the continuation of the Nazi revolution. In accordance with Nazi ideology, German youth were to focus on physical development, and sophisticated methods of propaganda were used to gain their support for the movement's ideals.

Hitler Youth was run by an official government agency, the Reich Youth Leadership. Members were organized into two age groups: 10-14 and 14-18, and divided into military units. Boys were given uniforms and bayonets; when they turned 19, they were drafted into the Reich Labor Service, after which they joined the army. Girls were taught to be the ideal Nazi woman—obedient, self-sacrificing, dutiful, and physically fit. The ideal for them would be to bear “superior” Aryan children for the nation.

In 1936 membership in Hitlerjugend was made compulsory by law for all Germans aged 10-18. By the time World War II began in 1939, over 7 million young people – more than 82% of German children and teens – were members.

Since racial antisemitism lay at the heart of Nazi ideology, members of the Nazi youth movement were taught to hate all Jews and regard them as their foremost enemies. This indoctrination was carried out by means of antisemitic lectures and speeches, slogans, propaganda publications, and national youth rallies, among other things. Jews, of course, were prohibited from joining the Hitlerjugend. Movement activities essentially eclipsed formal education and often turned young people into their families' lead Nazis and lead antisemites.



Berlin, Germany, 1933, A May 1st gathering of the Hitler Jugend

“IN THE PRESENCE OF THIS BLOOD BANNER WHICH REPRESENTS OUR FÜHRER, I SWEAR TO DEVOTE ALL MY ENERGIES AND MY STRENGTH TO THE SAVIOR OF OUR COUNTRY, ADOLF HITLER. I AM WILLING AND READY TO GIVE UP MY LIFE FOR HIM, SO HELP ME GOD.”

– Jungvolk or Young People's Oath, taken by ten-year-olds on first entering the Hitler Youth