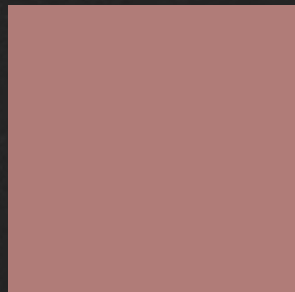
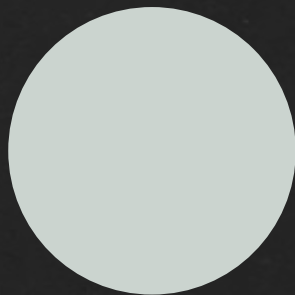


# Growing Up with Antisemitism: Nazi Youth Groups and the Hitler Youth Generation

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By Mollie Schnurr (she/her)



How was the Hitler Youth Generation affected by Nazi Youth groups, and how did their antisemitism affect their Jewish peers and themselves during and after the war?

1. How was antisemitism taught?
2. How were children involved in antisemitic acts during the Holocaust?
3. How does the Hitler Youth Generation remember their involvement?

# Background Information

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1. Created by the Nazi party
2. Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls - wings for children aged 14 to 18
3. Aimed to indoctrinate children into Nazi ideology - preparing boys for military service, and girls for homemaking.
4. Attendance was made compulsory in 1939 with the Hitler Youth Law
5. Had to be German national origins and German radicalized stock



# How was antisemitism taught?

1. Activities and lessons were all structured around teaching Nazi ideology
  - a. Gain loyalty and obedience to state, party and Hitler, build perfect German children
2. Physical education - strengthen German population
3. Nature and camping - lebensraum
4. Classroom lessons - explicit teaching of ideology, limited history
5. Attended after school and on the weekends
6. In uniform year-round - reports from memoirs that uniform gave a sense of power and belonging



# How were children involved in antisemitic acts during the Holocaust?

1. Training for participating in the Nazi regime
  - a. When they became adults they would be drafted into the army or SS
    - i. Example was Irma Grese a notorious guard who had been part of the BMD
2. Participation in the regime
  - a. Children would do jobs often replacing soldiers
3. Antisemitism against peers
  - a. Official guidelines prohibited young people from using arbitrary force
  - b. Reports from Jewish children of fear at the sight of their uniform - they would often harass Jewish peers

# How does the Hitler Youth Generation remember their involvement?

1. Hitler Youth Generation - the generation of Germans who had grown up participating in Nazi Youth groups
2. They took a significant amount of prominence in memoirs because they were telling their stories without guilt
3. Debate of if they were indoctrinated, or if they maintained agency - has implications for amount of blame they should be responsible for
4. Antisemitic attitudes are particularly pronounced for those who grew up under Nazis
  - a. More antisemitic than the generation preceding or following them, a differential affect visible in survey research after the war

# Important Secondary Sources

**Tiia Sahrakorpi, “Memory, Family, and the Self in Hitler Youth Generation Narratives.”**

1. Review of popular memoirs written by the Hitler Youth Generation, examining similarities and differences in memory

**André Postert, “Isolated Actions against Non-Aryans Are to Be Strictly Discontinued’ the Hitler Youth and Violence against Jews.”**

1. Looks at antisemitic actions taken by children, and the degree to which these were sanctioned or encouraged by the Nazi party

**Dagmar Reese, and William Templer. *Growing up Female in Nazi Germany*.**

2. Looks at the experience of Girls in Nazi Youth organizations, and how this differed from the male experience

**Michael Kater. *Hitler Youth*.**

1. Overview of organizational history, takes a critical perspective on question of blame

# Important Primary Sources

## Oral Histories

- Peter Becker (Hitler Youth Participant)
- Herbert Oppenheimer (Hitler Youth Participant)
- Alfons Heck (Hitler Youth Participant)
- Leo Diamantstein (Jewish Child Affected)

## Memoirs

- Both from participants, and Jewish children

## Nazi Documents

- Law on the Hitler Youth (December 1, 1936)
- The Nazi Primer
- Propaganda Slides





This essay will argue that the Hitler Youth Generation were taught antisemitism through their participation in Nazi Youth groups, turning them into perpetrators of the Holocaust, negatively affecting their Jewish peers, and which resulted in a skewed generational perspective on their involvement and history.

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**Working Thesis**

# Changes

1. Pivot from question of “are children perpetrators” to children as perpetrators (remove psychological questions)
2. No longer looking at the impact on German families
3. Now discussing what they were taught

# Research Limitations and Issues

1. Much of the research is conducted by people who have a personal stake in it (they were involved, parents, grandparents)
2. Research focus on organizational history, rather than the impact of the organization
3. Differing definitions of blame between academic historians blame, and legal fault



# Conclusions

## Photo credits

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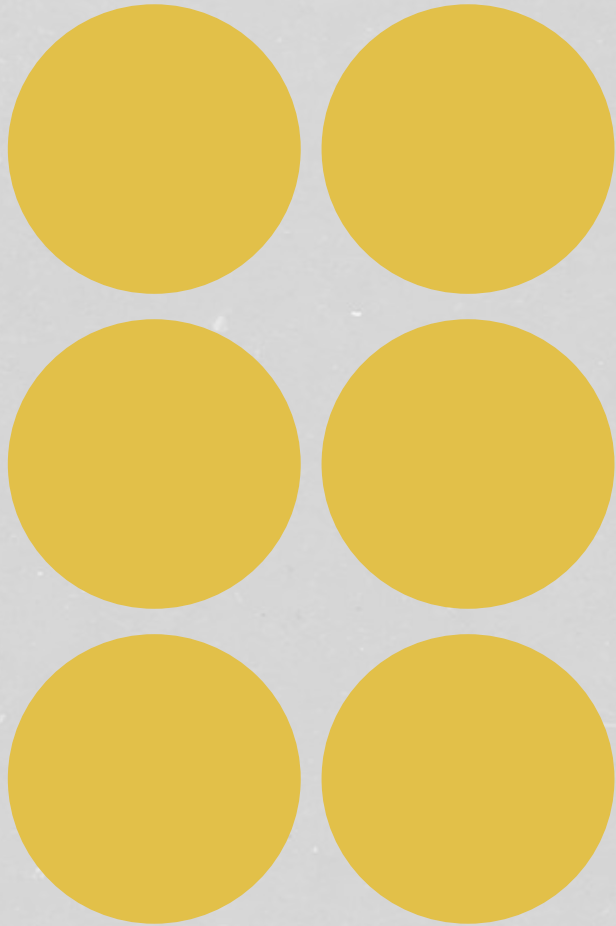
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**Questions**