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| **Hitler Youth** | |
| **ABOUT:** In 1922 the Nazi Party organized a group of about 1,000 boys in a group they called “Adolf Hitler Boys’ Storm Troop. In 1926 the name of the group was changed to *Hitlerjugend* or **Hitler Youth**. The *Bund Deutscher Mädel (BDM)* or the **League of German Girls** was created in 1928. In March 1939 *Hitlerjugend* and *BDM* became the only legal youth groups in Germany; the Nazis threatened to punish those who failed to join or who prevented their children from joining.  The Nazi Party believed children were the foundation for the new world they were trying to create. They had several goals for these youth groups:   * For boys, Hitler Youth was a paramilitary organization. Physical fitness was a high priority. Boys practiced military drills, learned how to use weapons, and participated in sports such as boxing. Hitler Youth was a direct pipeline to military service once WWII began. * Physical fitness was also a goal for girls although they participated in sports that were cooperative and synchronized rather than competitive and individualized. Girls also learned skills such as sewing, nursing, cooking, and housekeeping – preparing them to mother large numbers of children for “the master race.” * All Hitler Youth and BDM were taught the importance of conformity and obedience to the State and the *Führer* (Leader - a.k.a. Hitler). * German youth were taught to hate Jews and other people thought to be racially inferior. Jews were to be treated as enemies. * The Nazis used the groups to dominate the lives of German youth and reduce the influence of parents, teachers, ministers, and other voices of adult authority. In fact, youth were encouraged to tattle on what was happening in their homes, schools, and churches.   **YOUNG PEOPLE’S OATH:** “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.”  (Sworn by ten-year-olds when first joining the Hitler Youth.) | A red flag with a black symbol  Description automatically generated  **German Nazi Swastika Flag** This was the official German flag from 1935 until the end of WWII in 1945. It is not legal to display a swastika flag in Germany today.  A group of men in uniform  Description automatically generated  Hitler Youth members at the Nazi Party Rally in Nuremberg, Germany where the swastika flag was adopted as the national German flag. 11 Sept 1935. |

<https://echoesandreflections.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/03-02-05-01_StudentHandout_Hitlerjugend.pdf> <https://www.si.edu/object/nmah_1357427> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/hitler-youth-2> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/hitler-youth-members-at-a-nazi-rally>   
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