The Hitler Youth
Why was it Created And How Did it Grow so Fast?

The Hitler Youth was an organization that was created to pass down Hitler’s beliefs to the youth of the country. Hitler believed the future of Germany lay within the younger generation. Hitler believed that he could create a master race, a race called Aryan. He considered blond haired, blue-eyed Europeans the best in the world. "The weak must be chiseled away. I want young men and women who can suffer pain. A young German must be as swift as a greyhound, as tough as leather, and as hard as Krupp's steel." Hitler said that he was going to make a world that had no low or high class, everyone was supposed to be in the same economic standards. What he didn’t mention was how he was going to achieve this goal. He was going to kill people that didn’t fit into the category of Aryan. So how did Hitler get all of these kids to join the Hitler youth?

Founded in 1922, and originally called the National Socialist German Worker’s Party (NSDAP) the organization only included boys. In 1926 the girls organization was created, originally called Schwesterschaften, later known as the League of German Girls. The Hitler Youth name was given in 1926.

When The Hitler Youth began in 1922, it was not very well known, being based in Munich only. This would not last long. In 1923, the organization had just over 1,200 members. By the end of 1932 the Hitler Youth had 100,000 members. In 1933, when the Nazi Party was in power, growth rose even quicker with 2.3 million, 3.6 million in 1934, 3.9 in 1935, to 7.3 million in 1939 (approximately 82% of eligible youth belonged to the Hitler Youth at this time). It was the largest youth organization in the world. On March 25, 1939 a law was passed that all children that were not enrolled at this time would be taken from their parents and placed in orphanages.
At first it was only that it was recommended that you joined. But soon after Hitler made it mandatory to be educated to the “philosophies of National Socialist”, from age 10 and higher. Hitler’s portrait hung in every classroom and he was always forcing teachers to convince their students to join. Hitler ordered that all and any organizations in Germany join the Nazi’s or it was to be disbanded. So most of the recruitment for the Youth Movement was forced. Some groups did join willingly though.

I know that some of you are wondering how did Hitler organize all of this by himself, well he didn’t. Hitler had men that did it for him. One of the most important was Baldur Von Schirach. Under the power of Baldur Von Schirach the Hitler Youth grew to new heights. Schirach soon organized Hitler's Youth Movement into a “precise running machine.” He set up age brackets as well as a Hitlers Youth for girls, called the BDM “Bund Deutcher Madel”. The age brackets for boys started at ten to fourteen, when the boys were in the Jungvolk, and the boys from fourteen to eighteen were in the HJ (Hitler Jugend {Youth}). The girls had their age brackets as well, the young girls from ten to fourteen were in the Jungmadel, and the girls from fourteen to eighteen were in the actual BDM.

Once kids joined the Hitler Youth there were many fun things for them to do. In a sense it was like boy scouts, as there were a lot of similarities with the scouting program. Both heavily emphasized outdoor activities, especially hiking and camping. But there were also major differences. The Hitler Youth “HJ” was also like military training, the training included marching, bayonet drill, grenade throwing, trench digging, map reading, gas defense, use of dugouts, how to get under barbed wire and pistol shooting. All tasks individual and team, big or small, were competitions. This included sports, singing during

Baldur Von Schirach. The leader of the hitler
propaganda marches and aid collections. The Nazis capitalized on the young peoples need for peer approval so that each of them would think of the HJ or BDM as their real home. The Hitler Youth had meetings like any other organization but these meetings were different, they were designed as pep rallies to get more kids to join.

To the outside world, the Hitler Youth seemed to personify German discipline. In fact, this image was far from accurate. School teachers complained that boys and girls were so tired from attending evening meetings of the Hitler Youth, that they could barely stay awake the next day at school.

Teachers were a big influence on why kids joined the Hitler Youth. By 1936, 97% of all public school teacher (approximately 300,000 people) had joined National Socialist Teachers Association. From children's first day of school Nazi ideas were taught to them. Educators used new text books that taught these Nazi beliefs. There were portraits of Hitler in every classroom and they started every day with hail Hitler. Hitlers Birthday, April 20th, was considered a national holiday. But school was less important to Hitler than the being physically fit. Hitler believed that memorizing “dead facts” was not useful in the real word and when these kids grew up they would need their military skills.

Hitlers use of propaganda was another major part in so many kids joining the organization. Teachers lectured on why to join the Hitler youth, they used a technique called bandwagon. This technique was saying that all your friends are doing it, how can it be bad. Pro-Nazi propaganda was found in nearly every aspect of German life. In cinemas there were pro-Nazi themed films, where they were based on or around the Nazi idea. The Nazis controlled the Radio and newspapers. Songs were written with pro-Nazi lyrics. Hugely pompous speeches were done by Hitler with tens of thousands of people listening to him. Swastikas and posters of himself covered every surface in Germany. The SS would march with him up to the podium, where he would use his great public speaking skills to practically brainwash people to join and get friends to join with them.
The main reason for Hitler Youth movement was that Hitler was training each and every boy in Germany to become soldiers. The uniforms that they wore were similar to that of the SS, an elite part of the army. The Hitler Youth was really a training centre for future members of the SA or the SS. The way that the Hitler Youth grew so quickly and so strong was because of planning and great execution. Once people figured out what was going on it was too late, Hitler already had too many supporters and loyal SS men. Hitler's propaganda was amazingly effective and convinced people to not only join the Hitler Youth but to follow the Nazi beliefs. The Holocaust was one of the best planned genocides in history.

Works Cited


