

## Handout 2

# Activity 6: Prejudice and Propaganda

## Nazi Youth Groups



Poster: "Youth Serves the Leader: All 10-Year-Olds into the [Hitler Youth]", 1939.

Image: Unites States Holocaust Memorial Museum.  
Original documents held by Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.



## Nazi Youth Groups

The Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls were the primary tools that the Nazis used to shape the beliefs, thinking and actions of German youth. Youth leaders used tightly controlled group activities and staged propaganda events such as mass rallies full of ritual and spectacle to create the illusion of one national community reaching across the class and religious divisions that characterized Germany before 1933.

Founded in 1926, the original purpose of the Hitler Youth was to train boys to enter the SA (Storm Troopers), a Nazi Party paramilitary organisation. After 1933, however, youth leaders sought to integrate boys into the Nazi national community and to prepare them for service as soldiers in the armed forces or, later, in the SS.

In 1936, membership in Nazi youth groups became mandatory for all boys and girls between the ages of ten and seventeen. After-school meetings and weekend camping trips sponsored by the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls trained children to become faithful to the Nazi Party and the future leaders of the National Socialist state.

The Hitler Youth combined sports and outdoor activities with ideology. Similarly, the League of German Girls emphasized collective athletics, such as rhythmic gymnastics, which German health authorities deemed less strenuous to the female body and better suited to preparing them for motherhood. Their public displays of these values encouraged young men and women to abandon their individuality in favour of the goals of the Aryan collective.

The Nazi youth groups were about imposing conformity. Youth throughout Germany wore the same uniforms, sang the same Nazi songs, and participated in similar activities.

Significantly, Jews were not allowed to join these organizations.

## Sources

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Holocaust Encyclopaedia: Indoctrinating Youth* <<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/indoctrinating-youth>> [accessed 10 April 2022]

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Poster: "Youth Serves the Leader: All 10-Year-Olds into the [Hitler Youth]"* <<https://www.ushmm.org/propaganda/archive/poster-hitler-youth/>> [accessed 12 April 2022]