

**Baldur von Schirach**  
**and**  
**The Hitler Youth Revolution**

*Nietzsche's superman, destroying the old tables of morality, guided like a mysteriously seductive beacon an unfortunately not small part of the German youth guided it forward into a wholly dark future, which must be conquered.*

-- Friedrich Meinecke

*Without compromise, without naked force and alone by the power of our faith, we will unite all of Young Germany in discipline and comradeship. Thus we stride through a dark gateway into the future.*

-- Baldur von Schirach

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The huge success of the first national rally of the Hitler Youth held in Potsdam, on October 2 and 3, 1932, was not only a personal triumph for Baldur von Schirach but also a clarion call to arms for the movement and the party. Whereas the paid membership of the Hitlerjugend<sup>1</sup> had only been 20,000 in the beginning of the year, at Potsdam 100,000 youngsters swarmed over the heath outside this ancient Prussian city, transforming it into beehive of juvenile enthusiasm. Scores of workers from the SS and the SA had worked for hours preparing the grounds, erecting tents, and constructing a speaker's platform and setting up a post office.<sup>2</sup> Schirach and Karl Nabersberg, his assistant, worked hard to make this conclave an historic event in the National Socialist drive for power. A year later the Reichsjugendführer said:

The press may write what it will concerning this day, it is nevertheless certain that National Socialism proved on October 2-3, 1932 that the Weimar government may have had the bayonets, but we had the youth.<sup>3</sup>

The Völkischer Beobachter went a step further when it described the rally as a "highly political event," representing a thrust against reaction and an attack on pacifism. It was an expression of faith by the young generation in Germany's tomorrow, a demonstration of the Nazi claim to power, "for only a movement which can boast of the adherence of Germany's youth has the right to power in the state."<sup>4</sup> As he stood for seven and a half-hours saluting 100,000 future soldiers marching past the reviewing stand, Hitler himself seemed to be more certain of achieving his goal. Schirach described the scene in reverent and extravagant terms: "As the Führer mounted the tribune, uninterrupted jubilation ascended into the darkening heavens, his eyes became moist with emotion. Young Germany swore its allegiance to Adolf Hitler, and it has kept this unchanging commitment."<sup>5</sup>

The recipient of such unrestrained adulation was moved to return the compliment:

National Socialism will rear you to become believing idealists, for only great ideas will fuse the German people into unity. What can be more glorious than the powerful idea which has gripped the youth of our Volk and has revealed itself in the unique event of this night; the happy readiness to make sacrifices! Never will the German people perish as long as they respond to the ideals of youth.<sup>6</sup>

Hitler appealed to nationalism and classless unity. The reactionary Weimar government created their problem, he told them, but National Socialism was the "symphony of German life: and would rescue them from the drabness and divisiveness of their daily existence. What he had started they would finish and no one could stop them or silence them. Thus this new generation would

withstand the "fulfillment policy" of the Weimar regime. Schirach added that the hour would come when this National Socialist youth would bring about the dissolution of the Papen government and help construct a new state.<sup>7</sup>

Other commentators found historical significance in this impressive gathering. Wilhelm Kube, leader of National socialism in the Prussian Landtag, attempted to connect the great Prussian heritage of Frederick II with Hitler and his youth by stating that all the good things in Prussianism were to be found in Nazism and its younger generation. "Once the proud lags and standards of Frederick's army provided the entire German people with security and the guarantee of a special future; today the standards and flags of the National Socialists do the same."<sup>8</sup> The day of Potsdam had military significance for the party. It was the "silent uprising: of 100,000 young cadets, an elite corps of the nation, which had gathered from the far-flung cities of Germany to march unified into a new and distant land.

Naturally, the opponents of the NSDAP did not look with the same rapture upon the largest youth rally of the Weimar period. The Rheinische Zeitung, an organ of the Socialists (SPD) told a tale of abuse and tragedy, headlining its story with the caption, "The Hitler Nobody Knows." According to their version, small children, 6 to 12 years old were forcefully carted off to Potsdam to effect a great propaganda victory. While Hitler and his cohorts rested comfortably in a hotel, hundreds of crying and whimpering children went without breakfast and slept in the cold, drafty tents on the outskirts of the city. According to the SPD story, 120 youngsters were taken to hospitals where two died of pneumonia.<sup>9</sup> Even if allowance is made for party prejudice and exaggeration, this version cannot be wholly false.

Yet the Potsdam Youth Rally greatly affected the youngsters themselves, the party chieftains, the government and the people of Germany. No one could deny the fact that the Nazis had made formidable beginning in their campaign to win the hearts and minds of the young generation. It was only a foretaste of what was to come once Hitler seized the reins of government.

The excitement of illegality and the attraction of martyrdom made the triumph of Potsdam possible. The whole atmosphere of the rally was one of religious fervor and passion. It was a miniature of the thunderous psychological effects so skillfully engineered by Goebbels at the party rallies in Nuremberg. Baldur von Schirach was appointed Reichsjugendführer of the party by Hitler on October 30, 1931 and simultaneously became SA Gruppenführer with direct responsibility to Ernst Röhm. When the Brüning government declared the SA and SS illegal on April 13, 1932, the Hitler Youth went underground with them. Hitler made an effort to forestall this necessity by removing the Hitlerjugend from SA jurisdiction and naming Schirach a bureau chief of the NSDAP. Provincial Weimar governments had earlier passed laws forbidding the activities of Nazi organizations,<sup>10</sup> but the national government, perhaps taking a cue from the Länder, overrode Hitler's circumvention by insisting on the illegality of his youth groups.

The indomitable Jugendführer however was not discouraged. He carried his movement underground and relentlessly pursued organizational and propagandist activities. He even claimed that illegality had created a magnetic attraction for thousands of new recruits. In 1937 he recalled:

Even in the time of our suppression, without any visible symbol, we remained comrades, one in spirit and soul, an inseparable community. While we remained that, we won back our symbols, and as long as we

retain them, our will shall determine for hundreds of years the future of our people, which no earthly power can destroy. The Hitler Youth marches! For German National Socialism! For Blood and honor in the evolving nation!<sup>11</sup>

Martyrdom also became an irresistible weapon of propaganda, uniting the faithful and encouraging seekers of immortality. What Horst Wessel was to the party as a whole, Herbert Norkus became to the Hitlerjugend. Both were martyrs whose praise and adulation as fighters for a holy cause never ceased to inspire maudlin verse and song. The activity of the Hitler Youth before 1933 consisted primarily of minor rallies, marches, publicity campaigns, street demonstrations and frequent physical combat with Socialist and Communist youth groups. Twenty-six youngsters lost their lives in riots or secret attacks by 1934; six of them died in 1933 alone. None of them, however, achieved the immortality that Herbert Norkus attained. "He became a symbol of the inner attitude of the youthful community." On January 24, 1933, the first anniversary of his death, Schirach said: "Our dead shall not have fallen in vain. We will realize what appeared so clearly before them and what they in their bitterest hours sanctified through death."<sup>12</sup> What Schirach said in hushed tones in moment of moving silence, the *Völkischer Beobachter* proclaimed with banner headlines and imaginative reporting. In a series of articles and pictures running for a period of eight days, the party paper beat the drums for Walter Wagnitz, supposedly murdered by a Communist youth in January 1933.<sup>13</sup> The concern for Wagnitz, interestingly enough, was only incidental: the preoccupation with party propaganda was more direct and obvious.

The villains in these dramas were always the communists, evidence to the contrary notwithstanding. The threat of Red infiltration and subversion was one of the staples of Goebbel's technique and the Hitlerjugend propagandists

mimicked the master, if not always with the same finesse and effectiveness. For instance, on January 20, 1933, forty Hitler youth were challenged to attend a Communist youth meeting of 300. When the singing of the "International" began fistfights and rioting broke out, probably provoked by the minority. Several rowdies were taken to the hospital, and the police imprisoned forty-eight Communists and five Nazis. The party paper spoke in mournful but proud tones about the "cowardly attack on the Hitler Youth." It even related how bravely several wounded Nazi youth had helped the police catch the vicious Communist criminals.<sup>14</sup> These incidents strengthened the dedication of the faithful and also attracted new members to the cause, which acquired considerable prestige under the banner of anti-Communism.

The youth movement received additional publicity with the publication of the popular novel, *Der Hitlerjunge Quex* by Karl Aloys Schenzinger in January. The *Völkischer Beobachter* immediately ran installments and described the book in glowing terms:

It brings before our eyes in living description and with impressive impartiality a cross-section of the imperiled and struggling life of the Hitler Youth in Berlin.... The particular strength of the work lies in the relentless, almost merciless unveiling of the truth concerning the naked reality of the spiritual and material conflict of the Hitler Youth.<sup>15</sup>

The book was made into a motion picture, which became a sensation all over Germany.

The appointment of Hitler as Chancellor on January 30, 1933, an event for which the Hitler Youth leadership claimed considerable credit, was not only a highly emotional experience for Schirach and his colleagues, but it also measurably changed their attitudes and methods. Since the Potsdam Rally, the Reichsjugendführer had been traveling from city to city proclaiming the Nazi

gospel and recruiting for its youthful army. On January 30 he was in Ruhr-Niederhein with one of his local leaders, Hartmann Lauterbacher. The news from Berlin made clear to Schirach what his new task would be:

It meant that now we must apply the victory of the movement to the entire youth. Our ministers were overloaded with their new problems and worked day and night. We could not wait until they had time to solve the question of the youth. Therefore we had to handle it ourselves.<sup>16</sup>

That they did with deliberate speed and finality in the coming months of this "year of the power seizure."

Baldur von Schirach emerged into the national spotlight as the official radio commentator for the impressive "Day of Potsdam," March 21, 1933, the ceremonial opening of the Reichstag, which was to give Hitler dictatorial power over Germany. To the nation and the world he proclaimed: "Here we are experiencing nothing less than the uprising of the eternal youth of our Volk. Prussianism and youth are one and the same." To the youngsters he intoned: "How our dead are revenged, my dear boys, and you can tell your fathers and mothers that 300,000 of us have a part in the events of this proud day."<sup>17</sup> Thus spoke the poet laureate of the party, whose canonization as the new Siegfried of the modern Nibelungen was about to take place.

Since its inception at the turn of the century, the German Youth Movement had traveled a long and meandering road under varying leadership and with varied success. The Wandervogel groups of the pre-war period and the Bünde of the 1920s had been unable to create a unified organization, despite many efforts. In 1927 the Reich Council of German Youth Associations, with central offices in Berlin, represented five million youngsters divided into seventy-four different organizations. Within its loose federal structure was

comprised a considerable part of the organized youth of the nation. Six different Marxist groups with a membership of 368,800 constituted 8.5 percent of the total, whereas twenty-eight different Bünde, with a membership of 56,350, amounted to 1.3 percent of the total organized youth contained in the Reich Council.<sup>18</sup>

The latter could not remain intact if the Hitler Youth were to keep its promise of becoming the only youth movement in the nation. In the early morning hours of April 5, 1933, Baldur von Schirach commissioned Obergebietsführer Karl Nabersberg and a picked commando of fifty armed boys to seize the premises and files of the Reich Council. Its surprised executive, General Vogt, surrendered without resistance and "peacefully" handed over his office to Nabersberg and Schirach. The latter rewarded him with an appointment to the Board of directors of the Hitlerjugend. Vogt reciprocated by writing a book, *Der Deutsche Jugenddienst*, describing the sport and military training program of his adopted organization. Nabersberg was immediately appointed to succeed Vogt in the Reich Council, and Johannes Rodatz was put in charge of the youth hostels connected with it.<sup>19</sup>

With the invaluable aid of the new facilities and documents, including complete lists of the member organizations, their officers, and activities, Schirach was able to embark on his campaign to integrate all youth organizations into his totalitarian organization. The Hitler Youth thus staged a mini Gleichschaltung mimicking the activity of the party at large. The Communist youth had already been banned, and the other party auxiliaries were dissolved when the parties were outlawed in the course of the year. The Jewish and Socialist groups were expelled immediately from the Council, and the Bismarck Youth and Hindenburg Youth joined the Hitler Youth of their own free

will. When the Stahlhelm amalgamated with the SA, the Scharnhorst Bund, auxiliary of the former, aligned with the Hitlerjugend.<sup>20</sup> Many youngsters meanwhile feared isolation and joined Schirach's growing enterprise.

Between the seizure of the Reich Council on April 5 and the appointment of Schirach to the state office of Jugendführer des deutschen Reiches on June 17, there was a definite weakening of the independent youth movements and a general migration to the Hitler Youth on the part of various organizations. Although war had been declared on the previous date, there was still some cooperation with non-Nazi groups. On May 2 both Hindenburg and Hitler spoke to an assemblage of scouts, free corps, church youth, Bünde, high school and university students and the Hitler Youth in the Berlin Lustgarten. The mass audience paid little attention, however, to the president's call for the elimination of unemployment and preoccupied itself with the idea of seeing and hearing these two "great" German leaders from the same speaker's platform. It was an isolated incident nonetheless. More typical of the general trend were the conversion of the militaristic Burschenschaft on June 6 and the adherence of the Studentenbund.<sup>21</sup>

Yet the quest for totality was not over. In 1932 there were 477 Bünde and semi-political clubs in Germany. Their number and influence had been somewhat abridged by early June, but they still provided the main obstacle to the Hitler Youth's synchronization policy. These groups had rejected Schirach's attempt to establish a liaison with the Hitlerjugend in the early 1920s and had thus earned his permaenmity. Even now the great majority of them were oblivious to the danger hovering over them.

Their appeal to Hess and Hitler over the head of Schirach did not help their situation. The latter did not feel the same way about the pre-war Wandervogel, for their existence had constituted a protest against the conventions of a bourgeois society, but the post-war Bünde were an expression of middle-class snobbery and thus contrary to the basic concepts of the National Socialist faith. The Hitler Youth, on the other hand, believed in:

1. The idea of self-rule
2. The battle against the concepts of bourgeois society
3. The will towards nationhood
4. The will towards the homeland
5. The will towards comradeship.

Whereas the Hitler Youth had built character during the years of struggle, the Bünde youth lacked the "cultivation of decisiveness," since it had spent years in endless discussion and fruitless hiking. It had been reared in an aristocratic individualism, which was of course anathema to the National Socialist concepts of state and society.<sup>22</sup>

On March 23, 1933 the Reichstag passed the so-called Enabling Act, permanently establishing the Hitler's dictatorship. Seven days later a majority of the Bünde banded together into the Greater German Youth Association, under the leadership of the venerable Admiral von Trotha. The idea was to become the youth wing of the Nazi movement, for the admiral was sympathetic to the Führer but disliked Schirach and his rowdies. The directorate of the organization in a regional meeting at Berlin-Grünwald on April 15 decided to "march under Von Trotha into the new emerging Reich."<sup>23</sup> This naïve attempt to forestall integration with Schirach's Hitler Youth was unsuccessful and brought retaliation measures. Shortly before the appointment of Schirach as state youth leader, stormtroopers surrounded an encampment of the Greater German Youth Association and sent 15,000 youngsters to their homes. Von Trotha's protest

to Hitler and Hindenburg, who was supposed to be the admiral's friend, had no effect. Although Schirach said that he had no personal grudge against Trotha, he insisted that

"the unification of youth could never be accomplished through an external union of constantly opposing bands, but through a philosophical idea, which had to be accepted by the young generation as a new law of life. The carrier of this idea was the Hitler Youth, and it alone."<sup>24</sup>

The continuing hostility between the Hitlerjugend and the Greater German Youth Association, which was turning out to be a formidable competitor, forced von Schirach to seek additional power from Hitler. Thus, on June 17, 1933, Baldur von Schirach became Youth Leader of the German Reich with responsibility to Hitler through the Ministry of the Interior. His first act in the new office was to summarily dissolve the organization of von Trotha, who later became an honorary leader of the Marine Hitler Youth. With his power firmly established, the new youth leader published a decree on June 22 dissolving the various free corps groups, the different branches of the scouts and the Evangelical Volunteer Corps of Scouts. The Reich Council of German Youth Associations was abrogated and its tasks incorporated in the Reichsjugendführung.

All youth associations in the nation were to report to the latter by July 15, 1933, or face dissolution. The report had to contain complete information about the organization in question: name and legal status of the society; names, addresses and telephone numbers of the board of directors; information about the legal representative of the organization; office location, including telephone number; banking and postal accounts; membership figures. Statutes of the society and information about the local and regional chairman. Contributions to the Reichsjugendführung were to be required in the near

future.<sup>25</sup> With the rigorous enforcement of this decree Schirach had come a long way towards the totalitarian synchronization of Young Germany. The only major youth groups still outside his empire were the Protestant and Catholic organizations.

By the summer of 1933 Baldur von Schirach, this young aristocrat of twenty-six, had become a miniature dictator. Born in Berlin, he had spent his childhood and formative years in Goethe's Weimar and in 1927 had begun his study of German folklore and the history of art. He had met Hitler while on guard duty with the SA, and in Munich they had become good friends, finding that they had mutual interest in art and architecture. This intimate tie was not severed until Schirach's "conversion" in the prison cells of Nürnberg in 1945. His maudlin verses expressed a self-sacrificing obsequiousness to the Führer and indoctrinated a whole generation of his followers. A colleague believed that "the fighting spirit of his verse was the glorious expression of the National Socialist experience."<sup>26</sup> An American student thought that "his uncompromising behavior ... endeared him to the legions of adolescents to whom he [was] a reincarnated Siegfried, flashing a golden sword."<sup>27</sup>

The mediocrity and confusion of his mind did not prevent his contemporaries from elevating him to the chambers of the Nazi Valhalla:

There is a symbol, which divides the spirits. It is the Reich Youth Leader, Baldur von Schirach. We youth who have the blood of National Socialism coursing through our veins, who cannot be anything else except National Socialist unless we sin against our own blood, are unconditionally devoted to him. Those who attack and slander him attack the German Youth. And the enemies of youth are the enemies of the state. Beware!<sup>28</sup>

His success was obviously anchored in the Nazi concept of charisma, and not in his intelligence or leadership abilities in the conventional sense. Schirach paid

little attention to organizational detail. He concentrated his efforts on calling his followers and subordinates to arms against all opposition. "Since he did not reach the zenith of his power until 1936, when a law forcing all young people to the nation to join the Hitler Youth was passed, his program in the summer of 1933 was simply the "demand for totality." As the party had had to first destroy all other political entities before it could reconstruct Germany in its image, so the Hitler Youth had to unite German youth politically before it could embark on a broad program of work. And in this sense the Reichsjugendführung had to prove that it could maintain its position in the political structure of the Third Reich.

The drive for totality continued unabated through the summer and fall of 1933. Franz Otto Wrede wrote in the appropriately name periodical *Wille und Macht*:

This state is our state. Already today we are its carriers, for what remains of a state, which like that of Weimar has its youth in opposition? The totalitarian demand of the state is also the demand of the Hitler Youth: *ni una salus extra ecclesiam!*<sup>29</sup>

In October the "youth factory cells" were incorporated into the growing organization, which by this time had reached nearly 2.5 million. On the occasion of the factory cell transfer, Schirach proclaimed:

The broad mass of the middle class could not recognize the victorious force and the compelling necessity of our ideas; and we had the bitter experience that these people could not understand our youthful will to power and the driving impulse which motivated us despite the sacrifice and persecution of our time of struggle.<sup>30</sup>

In December Schirach, in an agreement with Dr. Robert Ley of the Arbeiter Front, incorporated its youth branch. The Hitler Youth fused the "Strength

through Joy program with the "Workers Front" youth bureau. The combined group was to function within the Social Department of the Hitler Youth under the direction of Franz Langer.<sup>31</sup> In January 1934, by an agreement with Walter Darré, leader of the farmer's organization, the Hitlerjugend incorporated all agrarian youth groups except the Artamanen who joined voluntarily in October 1934.<sup>32</sup>

The various scout groups united in the federal Reichschaft Deutscher Pfadfinder were not amalgamated until 1934, for fear of foreign reaction, since they were members of the international scout organization. Some isolated former leaders of the Bünde dared to oppose the monolith of Schirach by forming unofficial organizations, such as the "Black Front" and the "Resistance Circle."<sup>33</sup> Their influence among the youth was negligible, but not their effect on the Reichsjugendführung, which was compelled to publish, repeated decrees of dissolution. Schirach seemed to take such defiance as a personal affront:

"I do not comprehend why there still are youth groups in Germany who cannot understand the temper of the times and the evolution of the German youth towards uniformity and inclusiveness."<sup>34</sup>

It is clear that Schirach was beginning to form vague notions in his mind about the mystic unity of youth and Volk, in the new community of the Reich. Gottfried Neese, embryonic theorist of the movement, expressed it as follows: "Because he transformed youth into a reserve corps and service battalion, it was possible for him to forge the strife-ridden youth of the world [sic] into a unity, which no other people could surpass."<sup>35</sup> He saw to it that this movement became not only a young defensive force, but that it adopted a political and cultural mission, thus preparing itself to accomplish difficult task for the Führer. He hammered into the brains of his disciples the notion that "they stood in the

dawn of a thousand-year National Socialist history and that they worked not only for themselves, but for the community which was to come after them. They must possess the duty and responsibility the future demanded of them."<sup>36</sup> Schirach elaborated further on this theme during a speech at the Berlin Sportpalast on October 17:

"We are not a young political army of profit-hunters, but we are a community of self-sacrificing devotees and believers, who are prepared, to replace the "I" which governed our people for fourteen years, with the idea that we are a holy fellowship, which is more than the life and existence of the individual."<sup>37</sup>

From the cultivation of this community spirit would arise the will and strength to become the leadership corps of the future. He insisted that youth was not interested in conquering the world but only sought "to conquer self and Germany."

Schirach was credited with realizing for the first time the principle of self-rule in the German Youth Movement. Youth was to lead youth, and surprisingly enough, few of the Nazi youth leaders were above the age of thirty - which lent credibility to his claim. On December 3 he said to members of the foreign press, which he guided through the Reichsjugendführung offices, that this principle had proven itself. Up to then his organization had been primarily engaged in propaganda, but henceforth it would concentrate on education, training and the development of its core ideas.<sup>38</sup> To do this the leaders would not merely spread knowledge, but preach, admonish and set examples by upright living.

Youth, Volk, Party, State - this was the mystic nexus that inspired Schirach and his cohorts. "The National Socialist youth and the Party sense their unity. The leaders of the party methodically promoted the youth movement, rather than limiting its development and form."<sup>39</sup> Through the youth the party

participated in the work of the state. The Jugendführer by being a member of both the party and the state acted as the symbol of the mystic unity. To his followers he said:

Membership in the Hitler Youth is not a guarantee that you will become a part of one of the orders of the movement. But he who in the years of his youth has fulfilled his duties to the movement can rest assured that the gates of the party will open to him on the day when the festive transfer of the youth to the NSDAP takes place.<sup>40</sup>

With the appointment of Schirach as supreme youth leader on June 17, 1933, a Reich Youth Office was established to meet the anticipated influx of organizations and the increase in youth activities. It was to be the central governing body of all male and female youth associations as well as of the youth auxiliaries of adult organizations. Now groups could form only with official permission of the Youth Leader and this office.<sup>41</sup> A thorough administrative reorganization took place, transforming the former party branch into an enlarged segment of the state machinery. This process became a model for similar renovations on the regional and local level. The basic structure consisted of Hitlerjugend (14-18 years), Jungvolk (10-14 years) and Bund Deutscher Mädel (14-21 years). By the end of the year these organizations had a total membership of 2,292,941 and consisted of the following local units:

<b>Hitlerjugend</b>	<b>Bund Deutscher Mädel</b>
5 Obergebiete (regions)	5 Gauverbände (provincial associations)
22 Gebiete (districts)	22 Obergäue (upper provinces)

82 Oberbanne (super regiments)	83 Gaue (provinces)
328 Banne (regiments)	330 Untergaue (lower province)
Jungvolk: 580 Jungbanne (young regiments)	

The departments and functions of the Reich Youth Office consisted of 1. Social Work; 2. Ideological schooling; 3. Military training and physical culture; 4. Cultural Work; 5. Leadership Schools; 6. Short courses in Nazi Ideology.<sup>42</sup>

Throughout 1933 the Social Department under Artur Axmann was extremely active and productive. His primary tasks in the beginning entailed the promotion of social and physical hygiene, excursions into the countryside by city children, winter relief, and education concerning the "biological preservation and multiplication of the Volk." Schirach announced that the Reich Youth Office had collected 491,694,96 Reichsmark for the Winterhilfe of 1933-1934. The Hitler Youth of Saxony had spent 100,000 RM in ending 13,000 youngsters into the countryside.<sup>43</sup> The editors of *Das Junge Deutschland* applauded Schirach and Axmann for a remarkable political and social achievement. Gottfried Neese wrote:

Beside the task of synchronization there existed the necessity to overtake the non-National Socialist elements of the youth by the power of our propaganda and material accomplishments, if we were to establish a real youth leadership and not merely a youthful dictatorship.<sup>44</sup>

The main work of the Schooling Department, under the direction of Dr. Helmuth Stellrecht, consisted of organizing short training sessions for the leaders of the movement. Up to August 1934 a total of 287 three-week courses had been held, with an enrollment of 12,727 Hitler Youth leader and 2,466 Jungvolk leaders. There had also been 427 one-day seminars for 15,619

participants and 15,000 training sessions for sport leaders. A typical curriculum for a three-week session included:

Weltanschauliche ideology	38 hours
Physical education	27 hours
Scoutcraft	51 hours
Misc. (shooting, singing, etc)	27 hours
Total	143 hrs.

In 1933 the Reich Youth Office also embarked on an impressive building program of Reich Leadership Schools. These were usually named after youngsters who had died during the time of struggle for power and had now become political "martyrs." By the end of the year each Gebiet had its own school. In these schools a potent mixture of race, history, socialism, borderland geopolitics and Auslanddeutschtum made up the curriculum.<sup>45</sup> Since these schools were intended to cultivate the Nazi spirit, the "teachers will live in them the year round, they will grow into centers of culture.... And become nuclei of Germanism, ... the total impression of our mode of life."<sup>46</sup> Many over-enthusiastic young writers compared them to the cultural enclaves established by the Teutonic knights in the East in a time of colonial expansion.

Stellrecht also created the famous "home evening of the Hitler Youth," a weekly radio program entitled "Hour of the Young Nation." The topics of discussion, although varied, usually were chosen for their indoctrination value; for example: "the old German tribes," "Charlemagne and Widukind," "the German landscape," "the knights invade the East," "Socialism," and "peasant war and the reformation."<sup>47</sup> Military training did not become a significant part of the Hitler Youth work until later.

The curriculum of the Leadership Schools belies the statements of Schirach that the Hitler Youth was not interested in foreign policy. As early as February 1933 he called for contributions of a Pfennig a month for the work of the Hitlerjugend in foreign countries. On May 6 he concluded an agreement with the Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland. Since the latter pursued a racial-political policy, the Hitler Youth were encouraged to join it. Its physical and military training programs were to be taken over by the Hitler Youth, and the organization's racial work cells in the schools of foreign countries were to cooperate with the Hitler Youth. Karl Nabersberg of the NSDAP National Youth Office was appointed to the VDA Council of Leaders. Dr. H. Schöneich of the VDA became a member of the Reich Council of German Youth Associations. The same reciprocity was to be found on the provincial level. The literature and foreign excursions of the VDA youth were thus infused with National Socialist propaganda. Short-term schools were set up to train traveling lecturers from the Hitler Youth and the VDA.<sup>48</sup> The latter was finally entirely amalgamated with the Hitler Youth on April 5.

Meanwhile the press department through a daily newsletter "Space in the East" tried to keep German youth in Yugoslavia, Rumania, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Baltic states informed about events in the Reich. The exchange of visits with the youth of Hungary, England, Rumania, and Finland maintained contacts with their countries. Youth leaders from Greece, China and Japan came to inspect the Reich Youth Office, and Karl Nabersberg made special trips to England, Turkey and France in 1933.

As the year came to an end, Schirach's demand for totality had been practically met with the exception of the still outstanding Catholic and protestant youth groups. Before 1933 the former comprised 21.75 percent of

the entire organized youth of Germany with a membership of 781,000 divided among eight different groups. The Protestants constituted 11.88 per cent with 457,900 members and 19 different organizations.<sup>49</sup> These groups had been somewhat thinned during the course of the year by desertion to the Hitler Youth, but nevertheless some 30 percent of the nation's youth had not submitted to the invasion of Schirach's army. His cry that the Hitler Youth "was not concerned with caste or confessionism, only with Germanism,"<sup>50</sup> did not allay their fears.

On December 19 Schirach executed a coup when he negotiated a pact with Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller, which incorporated the Evangelical youth into the Hitler Youth. The former recognized the latter as the only legitimate agency for the state-political education of the youth and the carrier of the Staatsidee. All Protestant youngsters under eighteen became members of the Hitler Youth, and those who refused could not remain members of the Evangelical Youth. All facilities and files were to be surrendered to the former. At the end of six months the negotiations among the various leaders were to have been completed. For two afternoons a week and two Sundays a month the evangelical youth were free to participate in church sponsored affairs, as long as this did not encroach on the political and athletic tasks of the Hitler Youth. Misunderstandings that might develop in the process of transfer were to be settled by negotiation between the Reichsjugendführer and the Reich Bishop. Thus 1.2 million young people joined the swelling rank and file with a consequent rise in the power and prestige of Baldur von Schirach.<sup>51</sup>

A short time later Müller appointed Pfarrer Zahn Youth Minister of the German Evangelical Church. The latter immediately embarked on a tour of

Germany's larger cities, speaking on the subject: "Revolutionary Youth." That he had learned his new catechism well can be seen from his speech:

The state has now again become a STATE. And the church will once more become a CHURCH.... The Evangelical Church and its youth agree with the word of Wilhelm Raabe: one has to cut bread with a knife, which destiny has given us. This knife is National Socialism.<sup>52</sup>

The Catholic youth proved more intractable, and after Hitler's concordat with the Vatican felt reasonably safe and secure. Their activities had been severely circumscribed by a secret order of Interior Minister Frick to the Prussian Gestapo and the provincial governments on July 0, 1933. Catholic youth organizations had proved to be a "danger to public security;" by their intensive activity they had "overstepped their limits," causing frequent clashes with the Hitler Youth. On the basis of the decree of February 28, 1933, emanating from the Reichstag fire, confessional youth (Catholic) had been forbidden to wear uniforms and insignia, to assemble publicly and to demonstrate with flags and pennants.<sup>53</sup> Article 31 of the Concordat did not remove these restrictions but guaranteed the freedom to carry on charitable, cultural and religious activities as long as these did not occur within the confine of a political party. Sports and other activities of the state-sponsored youth would not interfere with the religious practices on Sundays and feast days, nor would the state require Catholic youth to do anything contrary to their religious and moral convictions.<sup>54</sup>

This agreement, however, did not stop Schirach's bitter attacks and his incessant propaganda campaign:

The fact that 1.5 million Catholic youth have come to us since the seizure of power proves that the spirit of our adherents is better than that of the

Catholic leadership and shows that confessional bureaucratic thought in the long run must capitulate to National Socialism.<sup>55</sup>

He admonished priests to look after their own spiritual affairs and challenged the Catholic youth leadership to let the Hitler Youth take care of the costly administrative task. Those who really cared about Germany were inherent enemies of every confessional precept within a state organization:

He, who rejects this idea, no matter if he sits in a ministerial chair in our new Germany, betrays the tragic struggle of our people for its freedom. May our people recognize the great lesson of the last thousand years and for the first time express its unconditional unity against all dividing tendencies.<sup>56</sup>

Persecution of Catholic youth continued and turned into unmitigated terror in 1934. It speaks well for the spiritual qualities and unbending character of Catholic youth and their leadership that their organizations and activities were not crushed until 1936.

In his first annual radio address to the German youth, on January 1, 1934, Baldur von Schirach expressed the spirit of this "year of unification:"

A holy spring has dawned on Germany. An entire generation has found itself. Dissolved is the privilege of cast. This youth wants nothing but comradeship. Of what value is money or profit? We only know the greatness of sacrifice and dedication.... We are the guard [of Adolph Hitler], the instrument of his will. We follow him in blind obedience and fearless confidence. If he desires it, we will march with him against the very gates of hell.... German youth follow our flag! It is the flag of a selfless, holy fellowship. It lies on the biers of our dead and flutters above the living, a symbol of the blood brotherhood of four million. Salute the new fighting year of the German revolution with this sign of immortality!<sup>57</sup>

Schicksal has always been a favorite word in the vocabulary of Germans, and 1933 was for the great majority of them a year of fate. The events of those twelve-month might have exhausted the spirit of any people. Millions

found themselves making sudden changes in their mental attitudes and their daily lives. For many it was a year of awakening and renaissance; for a thoughtful few it was the emergence of specter; for all it was a profound experience. The young generation, immature, pliable, bored and frustrated, eagerly embraced the challenge, excitement and promise of National Socialism. They truly believed that they were riding the wave of the future.

By the end of the year the Hitler Youth movement had pawned several youthful theoreticians who sought to explain its genesis, its basic conceptions and its historical significance. What the ideologist propounded was not as significant as what the Hitler Youth leaders said and did, for by the beginning of the war their words and actions affected some 10,000,000 young people. Baldur von Schirach knew this. Original ideas, whenever he was able to produce them, were always subordinated to the party program. Ideas in themselves were considered far less important than action and propaganda. The overwhelming purpose that inspired him was to create a totalitarian youth monolith, a kind of state within a state, which would function as an aid to the party and its Führer and as a reservoir of leadership for the German Volk. The Wanderlust of the old German Youth Movement had thus turned into a thirst for power and taste for brutality.

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## Appendix

1. Hitlerjugend: Hitler Youth, including all subdivisions.
2. Reichjuugendführung: youth leadership of the Reich.
3. Völkischer Beobachter: Peoples Observer, official daily newspaper of the Nazi Party.
4. Volk: people, with racist overtones then used by Nazi.
5. Landtag: lower house of Prussian parliament.
6. Reichsjugendführer: Youth Leader of the Reich; Schirach's position after June 17, 1933.
7. Länder: plural of land, meaning German province.

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8. Wandervögel: roamers or hikers, referring to youth movement which began in the 1890s.
  9. Bünde: plural of Bund - band or association, but with a stronger meaning of cohesiveness; used for associations of the interwar period.
  10. Obergebietsführer: general, used only by National Socialist groups.
  11. Stahlhelm: the steel helmet - paramilitary organization connected to the Nationalist Party.
  12. Arbeit Front: Worker Front, replaced labor unions in Nazi Germany.
  13. Reichsenschaft Deutscher Pfadfinder: Reich League of German pathfinders - scouts in the conventional sense.
  14. Jungvolk: young people - lower branch of the Hitler Youth for 10-13 year-olds.
  15. Bund Deutscher Mädel: Band of German Girls - female branch of the Hitler Youth.
  16. Weltanschauliche: adjective of Weltanschauung, meaning world view or general philosophical outlook.
  17. Wintrhilfe: winter relief program.
  18. Das Junge Deutschland: The Youth Germany, official organ of the Youth Leader.
  19. Auslandsdeutschtum: foreign Germandom; in other words Germans living in foreign countries conceived of as an organic part of the fatherland.
  20. Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland: Association for Germans living in foreign countries.
  21. Staatsidee: the idea of state, very vague in Nazi usage.
  22. Pfarrer: minister or chaplain.
  23. Schicksal: fate or destiny.

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix for translation and explanation of all German terms.

<sup>2</sup> Günter Kaufmann, *Das Kommende Deutschland* (Berlin, 1943), pp. 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> Baldur von Schirach, *Die Hitlerjugend: Idee und Gestalt* (Leipzig, 1934), p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, October 1, 1932, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Schirach, *Die Hitlerjugend*, p. 30.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>7</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, October 1, 1932, p. 3; October 4, 1932, pp. 1-3.

<sup>8</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, October 2/3, 1932, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Partial reprint in *Wille und Macht*, September 1, 1937, n.p.

<sup>10</sup> Kaufmann, *Das Kommende Deutschland*, p. 20; Arno Klönne, *Die Hitlerjugend* (Hannover, 1955), p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> *Wille und Macht*, September 1, 1937, pp. ---.

<sup>12</sup> *Das Junge Deutschland*, January 1943, pp. 7-8.

<sup>13</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, January 3-10, 1933.

<sup>14</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, January 21, 1933, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, January 2, 1933, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Schirach, *Die Hitlerjugend*, p. 32.

<sup>17</sup> Schirach, *Revolution der Erziehung* (Munich, 1939), p. 16; Karl D. Bracher, Wolfgang Sauer, Gerhard Schulz, *Die Nazionalsozialistische Machtergreifung* (Köln, 1960), p. 150.

<sup>18</sup> Kaufmann, *Das Kommende Deutschland*, p. 18; *Das Junge Deutschland*, January 1943, p. 10.

<sup>19</sup> Schirach, *Die Hitlerjugend*, pp. 32-33; Klönne, *Die Hitlerjugend*, pp. 12-13; Walter Z. Laqueur, *Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement* (New York, 1962), p. 199.

<sup>20</sup> Klönne, *Die Hitlerjugend*, p. 13.

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- <sup>21</sup> Völkischer Beobachter, May 1/2/3, 1933, p. 3.
- <sup>22</sup> Schirach, die Hitlerjugend, pp. 13, 22-23; Völkischer Beobachter, June 7, 1933; Das Junge Deutschland, January 1943, p. 10; Laqueur, Young Germany, p. 194.
- <sup>23</sup> Laqueur, Young Germany, p. 200.
- <sup>24</sup> Schirach, Die Hitlerjugend, p. 34.
- <sup>25</sup> Schirach, Die Hitlerjugend, pp. 24-36; Klönne, die Hitlerjugend, p. 13; Laqueur, Young Germany, p. 207.
- <sup>26</sup> Kaufmann, Das Kommende Deutschland, p. 308.
- <sup>27</sup> Robert Carl Schmid, "German Youth Movements: A Typological Study" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Sociology, University of Wisconsin), p. 196.
- <sup>28</sup> Franz Otto Wrede in Wille und Macht, January 15, 1934, p. 7.
- <sup>29</sup> Wille und Macht, January 15, 1934, p. 5.
- <sup>30</sup> Schirach writing in Das Junge Deutschland, November 1933, p. 292.
- <sup>31</sup> Das Junge Deutschland, December 1933, pp. 349-350.
- <sup>32</sup> Wille und Macht, October 30, 1936, p. 13.
- <sup>33</sup> Wille und Macht, October 30, 1936, p. 12.
- <sup>34</sup> Quoted in Das Junge Deutschland, November 1933, p. 296.
- <sup>35</sup> Wille und Macht, October 30, 1936, p. 16.
- <sup>36</sup> Haartmann Lauterbacher in Wille und Macht, October 30, 1936, p. 21.
- <sup>37</sup> Quoted in Das Junge Deutschland, November 1933, p. 293.
- <sup>38</sup> Das Junge Deutschland, November 1933, p. 325.
- <sup>39</sup> Schirach, Die Hitlerjugend, p. 180.
- <sup>40</sup> Schirach, Die Hitlerjugend, p. 176.
- <sup>41</sup> Friedrich Axel, Die Nazionalsozialistische Revolution (Berlin, 1942, p. 73.
- <sup>42</sup> Das Junge Deutschland, December 1933, p. 350; Wille und Macht, October 30, 1936, p. 12.
- <sup>43</sup> Das Junge Deutschland, December 1933, pp. 354-355; and January 1943, pp. 15-16.
- <sup>44</sup> Wille und Macht, October 30, 1936, p. 11.
- <sup>45</sup> Schirach, die Hitlerjugend, pp. 135-138; Völkischer Beobachter, June 17, 1933, p. 1.
- <sup>46</sup> Werner Haverbeck, "Aufbruch der jungen Nationa: Ziel und Weg der Nazionalsozialistischen Volksjugendbewegung," Nazionalsozialistische Monatshefte, Jahrgang 4, Heft 35 (February 1933), p. 74.
- <sup>47</sup> Schirach, Die Hitlerjugend, pp. 132-133.
- <sup>48</sup> Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression (Washington 1946), vol. I, p. 1108; Klönne, Die Hitlerjugend, p. 13.
- <sup>49</sup> Kaufmann, Das Kommende Deutschland, p. 13.
- <sup>50</sup> Schirach, Die Hitlerjugend, p. 10.
- <sup>51</sup> Schirach, Die Hitlerjugend, pp. 38-39; Das Junge Deutschland, January 1934, pp. 20-21; Klönne, Die Hitlerjugend, p. 14; Bracher, Die Nazionalsozialistische Machttergreifung, p. 337.
- <sup>52</sup> Das Junge Deutschland, January 1934, pp. 21-22; the quotation is found on pp. 1-2.
- <sup>53</sup> Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. IV, p. 51.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid., vol V, pp. 364-5.
- <sup>55</sup> Schirach, Die Hitlerjugend, pp. 41-42.
- <sup>56</sup> Schirach, Die Hitlerjugend, p. 42.
- <sup>57</sup> Wille und Macht, January 15, 1934, pp. 2-5.