
GLOSSARY



CIVILIAN PROGRAMS OF THE THIRD REICH

Bund Deutscher Mädel (League of German Girls): Beginning at age fourteen, all German girls were to join the Bund Deutscher Mädel (BDM) for two or three years. Like the boys of the same age, many girls were already employed or in occupational training and thus not free to attend the meetings. BDM girls were trained extensively in domestic skills such as baking and sewing, but were also carefully schooled in patriotic virtues and taught to prepare to be model German mothers who would bear children for the state. Their uniforms reflected conservative standards of virtue and discipline. Meetings were often held on Sundays.

Jungvolk (Young People): All German boys and girls were to be inducted into the Jungvolk at the age of ten. The program was organized through the public schools, and participation was required. There were official penalties for noncompliance, but some Latter-day Saint parents were able to invent excuses for the absence of their children from Jungvolk activities. Jungvolk groups wore uniforms, marched in parades, memorized nationalistic songs and details of Hitler's life, and engaged in wholesome activities, often out of town. Meetings were held weekly, but usually not on Sundays.

Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth): All German boys were expected to enroll in the Hitler Jugend (HJ) when they turned fourteen years of age. Since some boys had already finished public school and were busy in apprenticeships, it was not as easy for local officials to determine whether a certain boy was attending his HJ meetings. Again, penalties were promised those who did not comply. Activities included sports, war games, political lectures, political rallies, and camping. HJ members wore a distinctive uniform, were taught to observe strict health standards, to deport themselves as gentlemen, and to act in every way as loyal citizens of the National Socialist state. Quite a few HJ units conducted meetings and activities on Sundays. Training with actual weapons was not common among HJ units.

National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei (National Socialist German Workers Party, or Nazi Party): Founded in Munich in 1920, the party attracted far-right reactionaries who were antirepublican, anticommunist, and rabidly anti-Semitic. Adolf Hitler joined the party early and soon became its leader. By 1929, the Nazi Party was one of the largest political parties in Germany. It steadily gained power until in 1932 it earned the greatest number of seats in the parliament. As the leader of the Nazi Party, Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany in January 1933.

Pflichtjahr (duty/service year): Because so many young men were taken from the local economy to serve in the military, the program known as *Pflichtjahr* was introduced to provide substitutes. Each teenage girl in Nazi Germany could expect to be inducted into the *Pflichtjahr* program, which would usually require her to render service in one or two capacities: as a farm laborer or as a domestic helper in a home without a father. The call to begin *Pflichtjahr* service came in the form of a draft notice, and the term of service lasted from six months to one year. During the *Pflichtjahr*, many girls had Sundays free, but Latter-day Saint girls were usually too far from a branch of the Church to attend meetings. Service on a farm within this program was often called *Landjahr*.

Reichsarbeitsdienst (Reich labor force): Preparing for and waging war required all the manpower Germany could muster. Thus the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (RAD) was formed early on to provide that labor and simultaneously to prepare young men for military service. The call to the RAD came to seventeen-year-olds in the form of a draft notice. They wore uniforms very similar to those of the army, marched with shovels rather than with rifles, and lived in camps that closely resembled boot camps. The most common activity for RAD units was the construction of roads, airfields, harbor facilities, and fortifications—often in foreign countries. A full term with the RAD was one year, and a young man could expect to be drafted into the military very soon after he returned home.

MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS OF THE THIRD REICH

Geheime Staatspolizei or Gestapo (secret state police): Under the command of one of Hitler's closest cronies, Heinrich Himmler, the Gestapo was responsible for the identification and arrest of enemies of the Nazi Party and the state in general. Known for their long leather coats, Gestapo agents instilled terror in the hearts of German citizens by

their mere presence. They were occasionally seen in LDS branch meetings but came and went in silence, never causing any interruptions or cancellations of meetings.

Luftwaffe: The German air force.

Marine: The German navy.

Polizei: Police; the term was also used to designate military police and police officials stationed in occupied territories, where they assisted the military.

Volkssturm: home guard; these were civilians inducted toward the end of the war to defend the fatherland; they were often more than sixty years old and, in some cases, younger than seventeen.

Waffen-SS: The elite combat forces under the command of Heinrich Himmler, whose personal titles included "Reichsführer-SS and Chief of the German Police." *Waffen-SS* troops wore black uniforms (with the SS lightning bolt insignia), fought on various fronts, and enjoyed better living conditions (see the story of Lothar [John] Flade in Chemnitz Center Branch, Chemnitz District). The term *Waffen-SS* is often confused with the regular SS—police units whose infamous duties included the command of concentration camps and death camps.

Wehrmacht: Technically referring to all armed forces together, the word *Wehrmacht* was also used to describe the regular army, i.e., the land forces (officially *Heer*).

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Adolf Hitler: Born in Braunau, Austria, on April 20, 1889, Hitler was a decorated veteran of World War I and became a member and leader of the Nazi Party in the early 1920s. His rise to power in German politics culminated in the combination in his person of the office of Reichskanzler (chancellor) and Präsident (president) in 1934. He was the so-called Führer (leader) of the German nation until he committed suicide in Berlin on April 30, 1945.

Hinterhaus: In German cities, *Hinterhäuser* were buildings constructed in the space behind

the main buildings on the block. The tradition of building Hinterhäuser dates back to the Middle Ages. Access to such a building was usually gained through a portal in the main building at that address. In some cases, one went through the entry hall of the main building, out the back door, and then across a courtyard (Hinterhof) to the Hinterhaus. In the largest cities, there were often several Hinterhäuser within a given block; they were usually designated Hof I, Hof II, and so forth (see Forst Branch Chapter, Spreewald District).

Kinderlandverschickung: As early as 1941, German city leaders found it advisable to send children to rural areas where their lives would not be threatened by enemy air raids. The program had two aspects: the transfer of entire classes of schoolchildren (from eight to fourteen years of age) with their respective homeroom teachers to hotels in tourist regions, and the evacuation of mothers with small children to the homes of relatives in rural regions. Under this program, school children were often away from their parents for a year or more. Many families disapproved of the program but did not wish to see their children in danger at home.

***Mein Kampf* (My Struggle):** This autobiography of Adolf Hitler was written while he was incarcerated in Landsberg following a failed coup against the government of Bavaria in Munich. The book was published after he left prison in 1925. Although some statements made in the book proved prophetic, the work was not popularly read. It was often given by the civil registrar to newlyweds.

Reich (Empire): This term was exalted to prominence during the Hitler regime (*das Dritte Reich* or “the Third Reich”) of 1933–45. The word was frequently used in connection with other nouns describing government programs, such as Reichsarbeitsdienst (described above).

Reichskristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass): Ostensibly as a spontaneous reaction to the assassination of the German ambassador to France, Nazi Party strongmen (SA members) attacked hundreds of Jewish synagogues and thousands of Jewish-owned businesses all over Germany during the night of November 9–10, 1938. Nearly one hundred Jews were killed. Most Germans were shocked by the open violence, but it was finally clear that there was no longer a place for Jews in Hitler’s Germany.