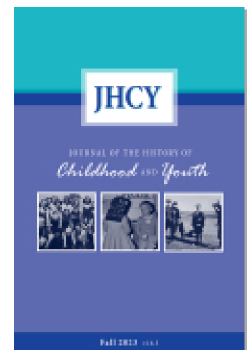
Belonging to The Body of The Nation: Gender, Race, and The *Volksgemeinschaft* in Hitler Youth Magazines, 1933–1938



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BELONGING TO THE BODY OF THE NATION: GENDER, RACE, AND THE *VOLKSGEMEINSCHAFT* IN HITLER YOUTH MAGAZINES, 1933–1938

Abstract: This article examines how Nazi children's magazines used emotional narrativization to create and sell fantasies about gender, race, and the Volksgemeinschaft *[people's community]. These magazines are neglected sources on Nazi print culture; their content and context add to our understanding of child indoctrination. Children's magazines had no Jewish characters in their stories, while dark-skinned, non-Aryan peoples were culturally appropriated and caricatured to create power fantasies. This article argues that through compelling narratives, hegemonic masculine traits were fetishized and glamorized to appeal to young boys in order to prepare them to serve in both the* Volksgemeinschaft *and the army.*

After the Nazi Party's rise to power in 1933, and especially once it had consolidated all youth organizations into the Hitler Youth in 1935, it was keen to create an ideologically cohesive identity for youths aimed at fostering a sense of belonging to—and a desire to serve—the racialized *Volksgemeinschaft* [people's community]. Therefore, mass media aimed at young people not only had to further the party's ideological messages, but it also needed to foster new emotional assumptions and responses to keep its readers engaged with the regime. This was achieved by means of a range of magazines that sold fantastical, imagined realities designed to be relatable to young readers and emotionally resonate with them. These fantasies conveyed to readers the kind of citizens they were expected to become, the values they were expected to embody and perform, and the kind of national community they were expected to come together to create.[1]

Hitler Youth magazines thus offer insights into how Nazi propaganda used emotion-triggering imagery and vocabulary to produce emotional responses in young readers and cultivate feelings of national belonging and loyalty to the regime. The magazines evoked communities dominated by the image of

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the healthy, heroic, and hypermasculine man, infused with Nazi notions of the racially pure nation. To perpetuate this ideal image of masculinity and racial hygiene, images of racial minorities were placed in juxtaposition; this included images not only of Jews, but also of Africans, Native Americans, and other Indigenous peoples. Youth publications therefore allow us to consider the intersections between hegemonic masculinity and race in Nazi ideology and propaganda. In short, these periodicals constructed and promoted a white boyhood fantasy with specific racial and gendered dimensions, using emotions as narrative phenomena to fetishize certain body characteristics and idolize particular racial traits that conformed to the regime's fantasies of the racial state.

The study of masculinity, race, and the *Volksgemeinschaft* in relation to the Hitler Youth in Nazi print media is underdeveloped in a literature that has focused on adult entertainment, to the detriment of youth publications and the emotions they evoked. This leaves a gap in our understanding of children's material culture in Nazi Germany. Similarly, oral histories do not address what former Hitler Youth members read or the media they consumed; in memoirs, discussion of media consumption is mostly limited to mentions of listening to the radio playing in the background, watching *Hitlerjunge Quex* or anti-Semitic films, flicking through *Der Stürmer*, or reading Karl May novels. The most prominent works on Nazi youth media are Arndt Weinrich's study on First World War memory culture in relation to 1920s and early 1930s Nazi youth propaganda and Tatjana Schruttke's research on the publication details of Hitler Youth magazines. Schruttke offers an invaluable analysis of the magazines—the types provided, their editing, style, and length, their popular acceptance, and the illustrations and advertisements they contained—but does not provide gendered readings of the images or text, or the broader cultural historical paradigm of Nazi Germany.[2] Promising new work on the relationship between media and emotions has raised important questions concerning how film, radio, and magazine media evoke and depict emotions.[3] Recent work on gender and race in Nazi Germany has illustrated the importance of analyzing Nazism's conceptions of hegemonic masculinity and femininity, along with how these differed from one another in juxtaposition with race.[4] Following Annette Timm's argument that gender cannot be analyzed in a vacuum and that masculinity in Nazi Germany was not the only "ordinary" experience of the regime, the study of youth magazines provides a window into idealized Nazi masculinity and gender norms—and, crucially, allows race to be integrated as a key category of analysis.[5] Examining the ideal image of boyhood presented during the 1930s illustrates some of the ways racial ideology and masculinity intersected in propaganda that facilitated youth radicalization.

As the focus of this article is on emotional readings of magazine depictions of Nazi masculinity, it is vital to examine how this hegemonic masculinity was constructed in relation to emotions.[6] Karl Christian Führer argues that Nazi mass media concentrated on providing feel-good stories that "offered a distraction," yet an analysis of the emotions represented in Hitler Youth magazines paints a more vivid and complex emotional fabric.[7] Using Voss's study of emotions in cinema, emotions will be considered as narrative phenomena, as the periodicals often used narrative and storytelling to convey propaganda messages.[8] Magazine stories allow readers to immerse themselves in the narrative, encouraging them to align their emotions with those of the story's characters. As a result, they are easily instrumentalized for propaganda purposes. Sara Ahmed's conceptualization of emotions as part of the "thickness of sociality" illustrates the relationship between the two levels on which they operated in Nazi Germany. In Ahmed's understanding, emotions are located in both the "body of the nation" and the "bodies of individual subjects"; that is, emotional communities are formed from the combined emotional responses of individual members.[9] In other words, the masculinity imagery in Hitler Youth magazines, and the emotive way in which it was conveyed, was both a way to make articles more appealing and a tool for ensuring that an emotional community developed among readers in a form that was useful to the regime. To create a strong sense of hegemonic masculinity, this emotional storytelling had to juxtapose masculinity to femininity and convince young boys that their biological imperatives defined and ordered society, and that without their emotional investment in the importance of race and nation, Germany would be in danger. As the boys who read these magazines were at an impressionable age—most likely between eight and twelve years old—this message had a significant impact on them, providing a compelling behavioral model for their role in Germany's future war.

Analyzing the use of emotions in magazines provides insights into the types of gender performances the Nazis wanted to encourage among the youth and how they manipulated mass media into promoting them. Emotions play an integral part in how mass media is consumed and remembered; they "signal what is relevant to us," making certain media messages more likely to be considered "real, psychologically real, or of real importance."[10] Although Hitler Youth magazines offer only a top-down perspective and do not include contemporary children's voices or provide any evidence for the reception of these periodicals, they illuminate how the regime attempted to use emotional vocabulary, tone, and imagery to normalize a specific type of hegemonic masculinity and racial ideology.

In the context of Nazi Germany, masculinity may be defined as "physical, emotional, and moral 'hardness,'" in the sense that the ideal man was envisaged as a solider who was "in control of his body, mind and psyche"; youth publications consistently placed equal importance on the physical body and emotional composition.[11] By selling a fantasy of hegemonic dominance, this narrative allowed men to convince other men that it was right and proper that men ruled, that there was a place in society for men who held power. In other words, the ideal man could exert control over both his body and his feelings—and murder for the sake of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.[12] Hitler Youth magazine stories and images reflected a hegemonic masculine ideal, one that emphasized wartime comradery, male friendship and bonding, and fetishization of the male body, and contrasted this with the equally fanciful conception of the racially pure, healthy, and able-bodied woman supporting the *Volksgemeinschaft* through motherhood.[13]

HITLER YOUTH MAGAZINES AS A SOURCE BASE

This article focuses on issues of *Der Pimpf* (*Morgen* pre-1937), *Die Jungvolk*, and *Das Deutsche Mädel* from 1933 to 1938, with other magazines—*Die Trommel*, *Die Fanfare*, *Die Jungenschaft*, *Die Kameradschaft*, *Jugend und Heimat*, *Die Graphische Jugend*, *Die H.J.*, *Die Mädelschaft*, *Die Jungmädelschaft*, and *Wille und Macht*—used for comparison. Though not studied here as it was not a Hitler Youth magazine, the infamous *Der Stürmer*'s cultural influence should not be understated.[14] *Der Pimpf* was aimed at ten- to twelve-year-old boys in the Deutsches Jungvolk (German Youngsters; the junior wing of the Hitler Youth), while *Die Jungvolk* was intended to offer older boys stories to read and share at Jungvolk meetings. *Das Deutsche Mädel*, published from 1936 to 1944, was a girls' magazine associated with the Bund Deutscher Mädel (BDM; League of German Girls), and served as the counterpart of *Der Pimpf*. These three titles acted as the main mouthpieces for the Hitler Youth organization in its attempt to inculcate a Nazi worldview among children. Magazines were chosen for this study based on their length of publication; longer-running publications inevitably had a wider readership and impacted more cohorts of young people.

Each magazine had its own key writers, some of whom are difficult to identify because they used only their initials, and on some occasions, articles were published anonymously. Some authors, such as Baldur von Schirach, the head of the Hitler Youth, were famous in Nazi circles or associated with the youth movement. Von Schirach was quoted at least once per issue in every publication and wrote many articles for multiple magazines. Von Schirach and Artur Axmann wrote for *Wille und Macht*, the magazine aimed at the Hitler Youth leadership

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and its ideologues. Jutta Rüdiger, the BDM leader, would sometimes write editorials for *Das Deutsche Mädel*, and, more broadly, her influence was one of the main reasons why that publication presented a more complex and nuanced message to girls than the other titles offered to boys (on which more below).

Hitler Youth magazine covers informed about the content of each issue, but each magazine also embedded many propaganda messages. *Der Pimpf*'s covers, for example, were often tied in with the theme of the current issue. On the cover of the October 1938 issue is a Native American man in traditional costume, and the stories included in the magazine concerned Native Americans and young German boys in the American West.[15] The covers of *Die Jungenschaft*, *Die Kameradschaft*, *Die Mädelschaft*, and *Die Jungmädelschaft* presented themes related to Germany and conveyed ideological content. Covers with Adolf Hitler and von Schirach were common, as were slogans expressing some of the main tenets of National Socialism, such as "We destroy the world enemy" and "To be a people [*Volk*] is the religion of our time.—E. M. Arndt."[16] Less typical, however, is a 1934 cover of *Die Kameradschaft* that features two ancient statues of a nude woman and man, as usually all humans were depicted clothed; this may have been an allusion to ancient Greece in reference to the upcoming Berlin Olympics.[17] Issues of *Die Jungenschaft* contained similar imagery and slogans. The cover of the March 11, 1936, issue features a tank in a war zone, with the tagline "Canyons in the West." The front covers presented certain models of masculinity, occasionally spotlighting key men in the Nazi movement. Cover images and messages varied depending on the theme of each issue, but they mostly hewed closely to Nazi ideas and circulated the same themes—the First World War, Hitler, sports, German military might, early Christianity, the Holy Roman Empire, Germany as *Heimat* [homeland].

DEPICTIONS OF MASCULINITY

The idea of masculinity presented in these youth magazines had both individual and collective dimensions, with articles, stories, and images often revolving around what was needed from the bodies (and minds) of readers for them to be of value to the "body of the nation." Hegemonic masculinity was articulated in *Der Pimpf*, *Die Jungvolk*, and *Die Trommel* by stories and images that perpetuated a fantasy of the heroic young boy, often depicted fighting against the "Other." In early Nazi publications from the late 1920s and early 1930s, masculinity was characterized as readiness to sacrifice oneself for the Nazi cause and through racialized body images, often with the First World War as a milieu. This trend changed gradually over the course of the 1930s, with two elements of masculinity becoming most prominent in boyhood print culture: the strategic

representation of the German male through the Hellenistic idealization of the male body and an emphasis on desirable personality characteristics. The Nazis attempted to create a new, distinct, and emotionally compelling definition of masculinity by presenting idealized masculine imagery in these youth magazines. To be considered masculine, men had to partake in heroic activities; often, and rather conveniently, this meant fighting in a war. The ideal German male would become a hero when he overcame his "personal flaws, especially gentleness and over-exaggerated sensitivity" or traits that were considered effeminate.[18] Masculinity was determined by a man's willingness to sacrifice himself for the greater good of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.[19] In addition to specific emotional characteristics, often predicated on emotional repression and containment, a physical ideal of the male body was constructed that prioritized a lithe but muscular build, with the typical Aryan features of blonde hair and blue eyes.[20] This idealization of the male physique, the importance of having the proper body image, and the value of youth culture and its potential for producing soldiers were reoccurring motifs of masculinity in Nazi youth publications.

This sense that both physical and mental "hardness" were important for the ideal man is evident in the way youth magazines emphasized the value of strength and hard work. The physical side of this could be demonstrated by working hard in industry and attending special Nazi schools, and magazines often included appeals to join the "body of the nation" in these productive ways. The role of the man in Nazi German society was to be not only a body that the nation could hone and use as a sacrifice in the upcoming war, but also one that could be utilized for work and further propagate the Nazi message. The byline of a front-page article in the November 1937 issue of *Der Pimpf* reads:

> You, boy [*Pimpfe*], always remember that a powerful state can only survive if its sons are hardworking and strong. Everyone who creates, whether with their brains or with their fists, is a worker. That is why Germany must be a country of work.[21]

One of the ways young boys could prove their masculinity was attending a Nazi elite school, such as a Napola or an Adolf Hitler School, which valued the ability to perform well in a group environment [*Gruppenfähigkeit*] and, above all, physical fitness.[22] A correlation was established between being of irreproachable character and pure racial health. Attendance was considered important not only for improving boys' individual physical and mental qualities, but for enhancing their emotional connection to the regime.

Hitler Youth magazine covers conveyed an ideal of Nazi masculine heroism to which a young male reader could relate because it was presented through

images of young men. *Der Pimpf* covers showed young boys engaged in various activities: riding horses, skiing, running joyfully. The local Hitler Youth chapter would have been able to provide monetary support for a number of these activities, allowing poorer children to participate.[23] In *Die Kameradschaft*, covers often depicted scenes from the First World War involving soldiers and tanks. Covers such as these provided positive reinforcement of the idea of an active male lifestyle, which was the root of masculinity and the healthy, idealized male body.[24] One cover image from *Der Pimpf* showed a group of Jungvolk boys running toward the camera, fists high in the air, showing off the youthful spirit that Walter Flex had depicted in his writing twenty years before.[25] These covers reflected the propagandistic nature of such themes and were designed to nurture in readers those personality traits most valued by the Hitler Youth leadership. As one *Der Pimpf* article put it, a boy's character "must be well-rounded. His will is to learn to handle life with boldness and cheerfulness. He should always be one step ahead, break away from loneliness and eccentricity, be a comrade among comrades and a jack of all trades."[26] This ideal of the young boy's personality resonated with the Nazi conception of masculinity, which encompassed a life of adventure, action, and heroism. This material was designed to provoke emotional responses in readers that would encourage them to join, and actively participate in, the emotional community of the Nazi Party and the German nation.

DEPICTIONS OF FEMININITY: CARVING OUT A SPACE

The role of femininity within the *Volksgemeinschaft* was more contested and was the subject of considerable debate in both the BDM and *Das Deutsche Mädel*. Magazine narratives perpetuated the promotion of motherhood and physical fitness (albeit for the purpose of bearing healthy children rather than going to war), but simultaneously expanded women's role to areas beyond motherhood.[27] Although the view of the role of girls presented in *Das Deutsche Mädel* was fairly unified, in *Wille und Macht*, the Hitler Youth organization's leadership magazine, the role of girls in the organization, and the skills that should be emphasized, were the subject of constant renegotiation and debate.[28] Women and girls, although the opposite of men in every way that mattered to the movement, nonetheless had some room to maneuver in terms of how to support the *Volksgemeinschaft*, at least until marriage.

To separate girls from boys as the Hitler Youth movement developed during the 1930s, magazine propaganda provided an ambiguous image of femininity centered on a healthy body and mind, but also on duty and learning. The first deputy of the BDM, Trude Mohr, stressed in her article "Wir Mädel!" that girls should have "purity of character and an honest will."[29] Between 1935 and 1937,

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each issue of *Das Deutsche Mädel* began with a feature article on a German or Germanic-rooted woman who had gained recognition nationally or internationally for her racial purity.[30] Such examples indicate that girls' and women's roles in the party and the *Volksgemeinschaft* were not as fixed as the literature often suggests, but were renegotiated due to the efforts of a number of high-ranking Nazi women, and those working for the magazine.[31]

Although much propaganda attempted to present a streamlined narrative of German women serving the *Volksgemeinschaft* through motherhood, as *Das Deutsche Mädel* exemplified through its dichotomized image of girlhood, tensions between the male and female leadership were much more nuanced and contentious.[32] This tension is most visible in how the image of femininity promoted in many boys' magazines was relatively simplistic (woman the mother), yet girls' magazines presented a more varied and expansive understanding of Nazi womanhood. To a certain extent, this reflected uncertainty and contestation within the Hitler Youth leadership about the form images of femininity should take. While this gave the writers of girls' magazines some freedom to carve out a place for women in the youth media landscape, however, this was always carried out in relation to the dominant image of masculinity.

CREATING BOY HEROES FOR THE *VOLKSGEMEINSCHAFT*

Much of the gendered imagery in Hitler Youth magazines was in service of molding young boys into men who would be able and willing to fight (and, if necessary, die) for the German nation. This could be viewed as the aim or culmination of the narrative of hegemonic masculinity promoted in these publications. To create an environment that encouraged mass volunteerism and ensure that there would be a body of soldiers ready to fight in war, propaganda had to provide an ideal of masculinity that was tied not only to body image but to war and militarism. In order to create the necessary loyalty and military devotion, Hitler Youth magazine stories and images reinforced the fantasy of idealized boyhood through depictions of heroism and sacrifice, while also emphasizing the importance of the community in whose name these deeds would be performed.

While it might seem as though the Nazis developed this idea of boyhood heroism themselves, its roots can be seen in the Wars of Liberation of 1813, though it was not established as a part of male consciousness until the First World War. During the Napoleonic Wars, the image of the romantic "German boy hero" infiltrated the imaginations of many young men. These young soldiers idealized heroic actions in war and strove after the glory gained through such actions. Masculinity could be demonstrated only by engaging in war,

which was the primary way for men to secure equal civil and political participation in the "post-war 'fraternal community' of adult men."[33] In other words, if men did not become soldiers, they risked losing their masculine identity and being seen as effeminate. While this definition of masculinity and heroism was discredited by the extreme loss of life witnessed during the Great War, Nazi youth magazines harkened back to this view of masculinity and boyhood heroism, which became a cornerstone of numerous stories.

Stories often centered on the First World War, reflecting the experiences of many of the writers who had grown up during that period, but also invoking the heroism associated with it. Writers sought to forge a bond between readers and First World War veterans, binding the two groups into a single emotional community defined by heightened, imaginary versions of the values instilled by military service. In one story of the First World War from *Die Jungenschaft*, a pioneer attempts to save his comrades' lives:

> The pioneer in his deadly solitude, while all around him the throbbing and tumbling casts everyone under its spell, pulls down the hand grenade, lays it like a mother pressing her child to her chest, with fervent movement in front of her upper body, presses both of his hands over it—his soul is going to be commended to the Lord God and also the earth—digs into the ditch and covers the hand grenade with his body.[34]

Boys' magazine stories laced with messages relating to the *Volksgemeinschaft* were rooted in male youth fantasies from the early 1900s, which often portrayed idealized masculinity through adventure stories. Images in Hitler Youth leadership magazines, such as that in a 1937 issue of *Die Jungenschaft* featuring a young man in a Hitler Youth uniform holding swastika flags with his chin held high, reinforced this sense of heroism and pride.[35]

Crucially, however, these emotions and values could also be conveyed through stories of everyday heroism and adventure; the comradery and sense of belonging celebrated in such stories were the same as those promoted in tales of service on the front line. The cover of the September 1938 issue of *Der Pimpf* issue shows a blond, determined-looking boy riding a horse through a forest, with fields on his left side.[36] The image relates to the main story of the issue, which concerns a young boy named Karsten who saves his town's Nazi meeting by riding to the next town to borrow a film.[37] Both the story and the cover image prompt the reader to sympathize with Karsten and his plight, and his triumph at becoming the town hero at the end. This narrative exemplifies that a Nazi hero was meant to do something extraordinary for the sake of the community.[38] Even stories without the explicit imagery of war could evoke feelings of heroism and sacrifice and thus contribute to the emotional

community the regime was trying to construct. In some stories, the Hitler Youth *Jungenschaftsführer* (Youth Leader, three ranks above a regular *Pimpf*) or another higher-ranking boy is portrayed as the hero, earning the gratitude of his community by, for example, fixing a boy's knapsack and saving him from humiliation before his peers and parents.[39] Generally, the moral of these tales was the importance of helping a comrade in trouble.[40] These small-scale heroic acts were associated with the idea of manly heroism that boys performed for the nation. These stereotypes of masculine heroism were thus closely linked with National Socialist values, and the two could not exist separately from one another.

Young boys were usually the central characters in *Der Pimpf* stories because the writers were attempting to make their stories relevant and showcase the individual body's relationship to the nation. While the morals of these stories illustrate what the writers wanted to emphasize, an important factor in the transmission of these messages was the use of a young boy as the central actor in the plot.[41] One story published in *Der Pimpf*, titled "Revolutionen" [Revolutions], gives an account of different European revolutions, including the French Revolution and the Protestant Reformation. It touches upon the returning soldiers of the First World War and the Nazi stabilization of Germany. In the first section, the main boy watches the storming of the Bastille from on top of an iron cross, telling his friends what he can see of the carnage. Throughout the story, the reader is warned of the dangers of revolutionary activity and the bloodshed it causes.[42] Storytelling of this nature was a common feature in many boys' stories, and even those that did not feature young boys usually had strong male adventurous protagonists.[43] By exhibiting this type of leadership and individualism, these stories connected their plots, characters, and the concept of the body belonging to the nation. This moral, however, was packaged in adventure narratives that were both absorbing and relatable for the young male readers, modeling heroic behavior that, it was hoped, they would want to aspire to.

DEFINING AND FOSTERING THE RACIAL STATE

Membership of the *Volksgemeinschaft* was not determined by behavior alone, however, and the emotional narrative presented in the youth magazines also defined the community along racial lines, reinforcing the wider Nazi message about who did, and who did not, belong. Recent work has noted that the Nazis had a fluid and flexible definition of race that was not wholly biologically predetermined but instead tied to culture. The Nazis "did not derive their political agenda from a theory of race"; rather, they used abstract notions of race to define, and create a sense of belonging to, the German community.[44] By tethering Jewishness to mainstream German culture rather than religion, for instance,

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they were able to create a seemingly clear binary between the German *Volk* and Jewish Germans, even when the dividing line was anything but clear. To be German was a form of cultural belonging that Jewish-German assimilation could never achieve.

Race was depicted through numerous different methods in the magazines, but it is visible primarily in the consistent use of imagery dominated by white Aryan boys, and to a lesser extent white girls. Depictions of the racial state in the magazines show the dynamics and nuances of the different racisms in Nazi ideology. Not all white Europeans were a part of the *Herrenvolk* [master race] and certain concessions for Germany's Italian and Japanese allies had to be made in the already flexible racial ideology. Although the imperial era in Germany had been short-lived, the long-term imagination of colonial dominance combined with Nazi *völkisch* ideology to promote a German mentality of racial superiority predicated on whiteness.[45] This sense of superiority hinged on a fantasy of whiteness and the use of cultural appropriation to lay claim to aspects of specific races the Nazis valued highly. Cultural appropriation is discernible through contexts, styles, motifs, and subjects, when an object is removed from one culture and placed into another.[46] Whenever race surfaces in the magazines, the writers idolized particular races and fetishized certain aspects of race. Specific images of blackness were constructed, rooted in Germany's colonial legacy.[47] These illustrate how the Nazis viewed, and wanted German boys to view, their position and future role in a regime entrenched in whiteness as well as patriarchy.

The racism and racial hierarchy represented in the magazines were not entirely biological, however; the cultural element was more prominent. Of the two main pillars of the Nazi conception of Germanness—whiteness and Christianity—only one was explicitly biological. The importance of race is most visible through the grounding of German identity in Christianity, underlining the notion that to be German was to be Christian. Magazines provided historical stories set in the Middle Ages and the era of early Christendom to fashion a Christian past rooted in Germanness.[48] By invoking the Christian past, the magazines created an idealized identity of exclusion, with Jews and Muslims as the main outsiders.

The writing of a historical past that was primarily white and Christian allowed the Hitler Youth propagandists to craft a narrativized racial identity for German boys and girls. This focus offered enough flexibility for other white groups to be included in the wider community of white, fascist European peoples. In a *Deutsche Mädel* article from April 1935 on Poland, Yugoslavia, and Romania, for instance, the bravery of youth in these states was emphasized,

alongside the patriotic indoctrination that occurred in both schools and homes, to illustrate the similarities between fascist movements at home and abroad. One way this similarity was indicated was through uniforms, which included, in the case of the Polish militia group Strelec, "medals and commemorative medals . . . on [the] uniform blouses, the left sleeve of which is adorned with the white legionary eagle."[49] Highlighting racial similarities with other fascist groups, while showing racism toward those without a similar sense of *Volk*, allowed the party to create a positive connection between *Volksdeutsche* [ethnic Germans] in other countries that would someday be liberated from Soviet influence.[50] This solidarity did not extend beyond the *Volksdeutsche*, of course, and Nazi ideology was vehemently anti-Slavic.[51] However, whiteness was considered an important defining feature of the *Volksgemeinschaft* and was intended to be a source of pride and provide a sense of belonging for magazine readers. On the other hand, readers were left in no doubt about the hierarchy that existed within the boundaries of the white race, with Aryan Germans firmly at the top. The immorality of non-Aryan Europeans was a prominent theme in the magazines and was used to stress the superiority of the *Herrenvolk*. In several articles dedicated to visiting other countries, while the foreigners are praised for their friendliness, the stories focus almost exclusively on rural environments rather than cities or modern industry, in order to emphasize the backwardness of these other nations.[52] In one instance, a story in *Der Pimpf* titled "Emigrant in Holland" tells of a group of Hitler Youth boys visiting Amsterdam and meeting an old sailor. At first, the boys believe the old man is a foreigner and not Danish, but after talking with him, they discover he is a former Hitler Youth member. The narrator states:

> And when we tell him more about our homeland and the Hitler Youth, he suddenly gets up, folds back the flap of his jacket, and what appears—we fell off our chairs in amazement—the traditional badge of the Hitler Youth: old fighter [*Alter Kämpfer*]—Emigrant—Emigrant—old fighter![53]

Aside from promoting loyalty as a long-standing emotional commitment, this story points up the double standard of white racism in these publications: in this case, the reader is told never to judge someone based on their appearance, as they may be a former German Aryan soldier.

Articles and images of non-whites, such as Africans, Asians, and Native Americans, show how the Nazis attempted to sell a selectively constructed fantasy image of other races that suited their purpose of defining Aryan whiteness and supremacy. In *Der Pimpf*, stories about Africa centered on the memoirs of colonial pioneers such as Richard Schomburgk (1811–1891).[54] Only a small

number of magazine covers, such as those of the December 1937 and October 1938 issues, show Indigenous men. The December 1937 cover depicts a lithe, muscular man with a carving knife, wearing a thin loincloth. The body suggests the man's dominance over the wild environment, but his lank hair, prominent hooked nose, and wrinkled skin indicate his racial inferiority to Aryan Germans, characterized by smooth skin, a shaved hairstyle, and an overall neat appearance. The appearance of Native Americans and Indigenous men in these illustrations drew connections with the Wild West and barbarism, tropes used by Nazi propaganda to further their militarization agenda.[55] In a May 1938 article concerning the failures of the French during the construction of the Panama Canal, the images alongside the article are of the Indigenous population. The images are captioned with the sentence "You can see that when you drive through the Panama Canal." By "that" the writers are referring to the people depicted in the photographs. Another article, about a group of Hitler Youth boys traveling to Shanghai, talks about the group's local guide, a "Mr. Lieu," who tells them about his ancestors, "because every Chinese is proud of his ancestors and likes to talk about them himself." As the boys march through the city, the Japanese occupation is visible and proudly denoted through descriptions of military uniforms and tanks occupying streets. Of the Japanese occupiers, the article writes, "A self-assured, self-confident, ambitious, and hardworking people." The Japanese, as Nazi Germany's allies, are depicted positively, characterized by a small number of race-based characteristics. Aside from these few passing lines, the article treats the Japanese tokenistically, illustrating that although the two are allies on the surface, the Germans are the superior people whose experiences are more important.

The question of racial hygiene and racial distinctions was rarely systematically discussed in *Heimabend* [evening group meeting] magazines, except in a small number of issues from the various publications surveyed here. Two issues of *Die Kameradschaft* between 1933 and 1938 focus on race: one issue from 1936, which focuses on the racial hygiene of the Germans; and one from 1938, which concerns Germany's colonial past. The 1936 issue contains articles with such titles as "Natural Selection," "Health Court [*Gesundheitsgericht*]," "Who Wants to Live, Fights," and "A People [*Ein Volk*] Stands Up." The first of these, an article on Darwinian natural selection, which had become closely associated with the Nazi racial ideology of weeding out the weak members of the Germanic people, includes the following line: "The goal, which is approached ruthlessly, without pity, without fear of sacrifice, is the preservation of the species, the race, the people. . . . The common good comes before the self. The individual is nothing; the people, the race is everything."[56] This statement reinforces the idea

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that not only is it important to marry other German Christians to keep the race pure, but only those of the same culture understand the necessity of sacrifice and working for the common good.

For the most part, however, race, and particularly biological racism, was not a prominent topic. Most conspicuously, images of Jews, as they were propagandized in other Nazi media, were not included in the imagery or stories presented in the magazines, which suggests that Jews and other representatives of the "lesser races" were being written out of the stories, myths, and ideals being conveyed to the youth readership. This could be viewed as part of the Hitler Youth leadership's strategy in its construction of its *Volksgemeinschaft* narrative. The limited attention given to race represents an exertion of power and control over the Other through ignoring and appropriating only what suits the needs of the oppressing culture. By not depicting people of different races, other than in propaganda caricatures or as bodies to be gazed at in disgust or curiosity, the Nazi youth press created a homogenous vision of an Aryan Germany and, when appropriate, Aryanized Europe.

These various techniques—emphasis, silence and omission, selective appropriation—were used in concert by the Hitler Youth leadership to craft a flexible but distinct narrative that made it clear to magazine readers who belonged to the *Volksgemeinschaft* and who was to be excluded. The necessity of allegiance to the National Socialist state was present throughout these magazines, conveyed through a focus on boyhood ideals. Race, when it was a central aspect of a particular issue's stories or theme, usually appeared in discussions spotlighting specific racial characteristics that suited the regime's agenda or its alliances.

CONCLUSION

This article provided a new perspective on Nazi media culture by examining youth culture, gender, and racial stereotyping in Hitler Youth magazines. The gendered and racialized narrative conveyed in these magazines was intended to provoke an emotional response in young Germans, fostering their sense of belonging to a national community that was defined along very specific cultural and racial lines. The regime was eager to create a deep attachment to this community and a desire to serve it via work (or, for girls, via physical labor of a different kind) and via military service. It did this by crafting a fantasy with these values in the pages of all youth magazines, aimed at being accessible to young readers. This emotional appeal was intended to make the regime's message both more real and more motivating. These publications used emotions to support a fantasy of hegemonic masculinity to strengthen and validate an "ideal" version of boyhood—exemplifying how to be the ideal man in terms

of physical body, personality, and actions—ultimately preparing boys for war and state leadership. The image of boyhood presented in the magazines propagated notions of a white, Aryan, male-dominated *Volksgemeinschaft*. In contrast, the image of Nazi girlhood evolved throughout the 1930s, and the Hitler Youth leadership was at odds over how to portray girlhood, racial purity, and femininity in a way that strengthened the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Images and articles concerning other races used cultural appropriation and fetishization to highlight Aryan superiority, to differentiate between Germanness and other cultures and thus highlight who did, and who did not, belong to the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The magazines show that Nazi views of race were not tied only—or even primarily—to biological racism, but also to culture. The magazines preferred to perpetuate the fantasy of Germany's cultural superiority through emphasizing Christianity, heroic sacrifice, and the Aryan man's hegemonic position. Stories about other races utilized colonial imagery and attitudes, indicating that German colonialism and national pride were considered important values to instill in young people. In some cases, race was used to foster solidarity with other white races that had the potential to belong to the *Volksgemeinschaft*. By exploring how the Nazis sought to mold the "body of the nation" through the emotions of individual subjects, this article deconstructed the Nazi gendered masculine stereotype and examined the influence of masculinity on societal, cultural, and power structures that permeated postwar German society and culture.

NOTES

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