



Association RldIM Conference 2015
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BEHIND THE BENIGN

***Reading and Contextualizing a
Photograph of Girls Playing
Recorders***

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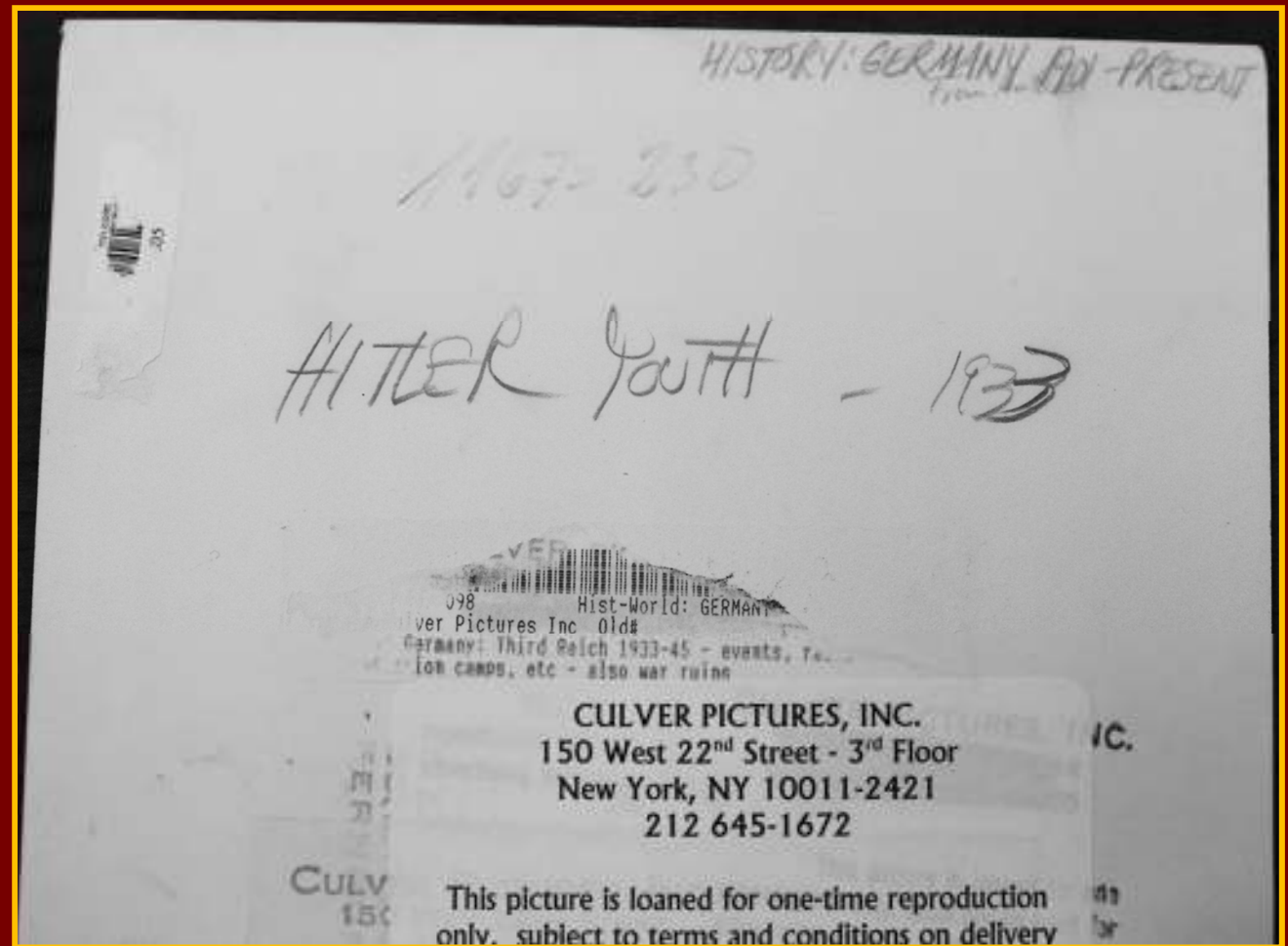


This 7.5x9 in. (19x23 cm.) B&W photograph was obtained in 2012 from Schubertiade Music, a dealer in musical rarities and collectibles.

The photo shows girls hiking down a grassy hillside while playing soprano recorders. They appear to be about ten or eleven years old.

On the reverse appears the handwritten annotation
“Hitler Youth 1933.”

There is nothing within the image itself to suggest that
they are
Hitler Youth!
This
identification
gives an
otherwise
charming
musical scene
some ominous
implications.

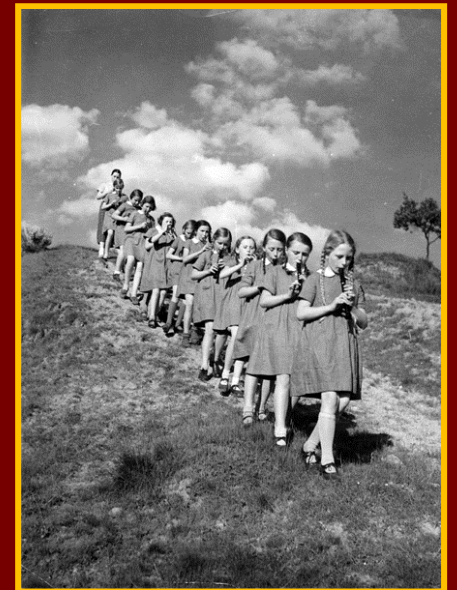




The girls, happily playing their recorders, create a benign and innocent scene that could have occurred anywhere, anytime. This dissonance between the pleasant image and its ominous caption is problematic.

When identified as a photograph of Hitler youth, this image illustrates a convergence of...

- Popularity of hiking and music-making in the German youth movements
- Widespread use of the recorder as a folk instrument (which was readily adapted by music educator Carl Orff and his collaborator Gunild Keetman)
- Purposeful control and ideological propagandizing of German children by Nazi leadership (using music as a “lure”)
- Retrospective construction of meaning (which projects a “future” for the children in the photo)



Deutsche Jugendbewegung (Youth Movement)

- 1900-1930: millions of teens and young adults allied formally and informally to escape the cities and return to nature and their folk-history roots
- Variety of groups: Wandervogel, Pfadfinder, scouts, church, trade, etc.
- Romantic notions: return to a more pristine condition of life, revive cultural traditions, affirm loyalty to each other
- They SING- music is integral!



Above, right: Musicians from a Wandervogel club pose during a hike; undated.

Source: German Federal Archives, Sammlung von Repro-Negativen (Bild 146);
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d5/Bundesarchiv_Bild_142

Right: Members of a Pfadfinder troop relax at their tent camp; undated.

Source: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz; Internet at
http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/print_document.cfm?document_id=2054





The Recorder Revival in Germany:

“Highbrow” vs. “Lowbrow!”

- Folk recorders used throughout 19th-century
- Early 20th-c: Arnold Dolmetsch (England) leads the early-music revival among professional classical musicians...but PETER HARLAN sees the recorder's practical applications as an egalitarian, easily-learned instrument for the German *Volk*
- Convinces Prussian educators to make these available to schoolchildren
- Influences development of the recorder manufacturing industry in Germany

Right: German luthier and instrument designer **Peter Harlan** (1898-1966), undated. Source: Christoph Harlan, “Portrait of a Renaissance Man,” Internet at <http://www.ruach.net/Grospapa.html>

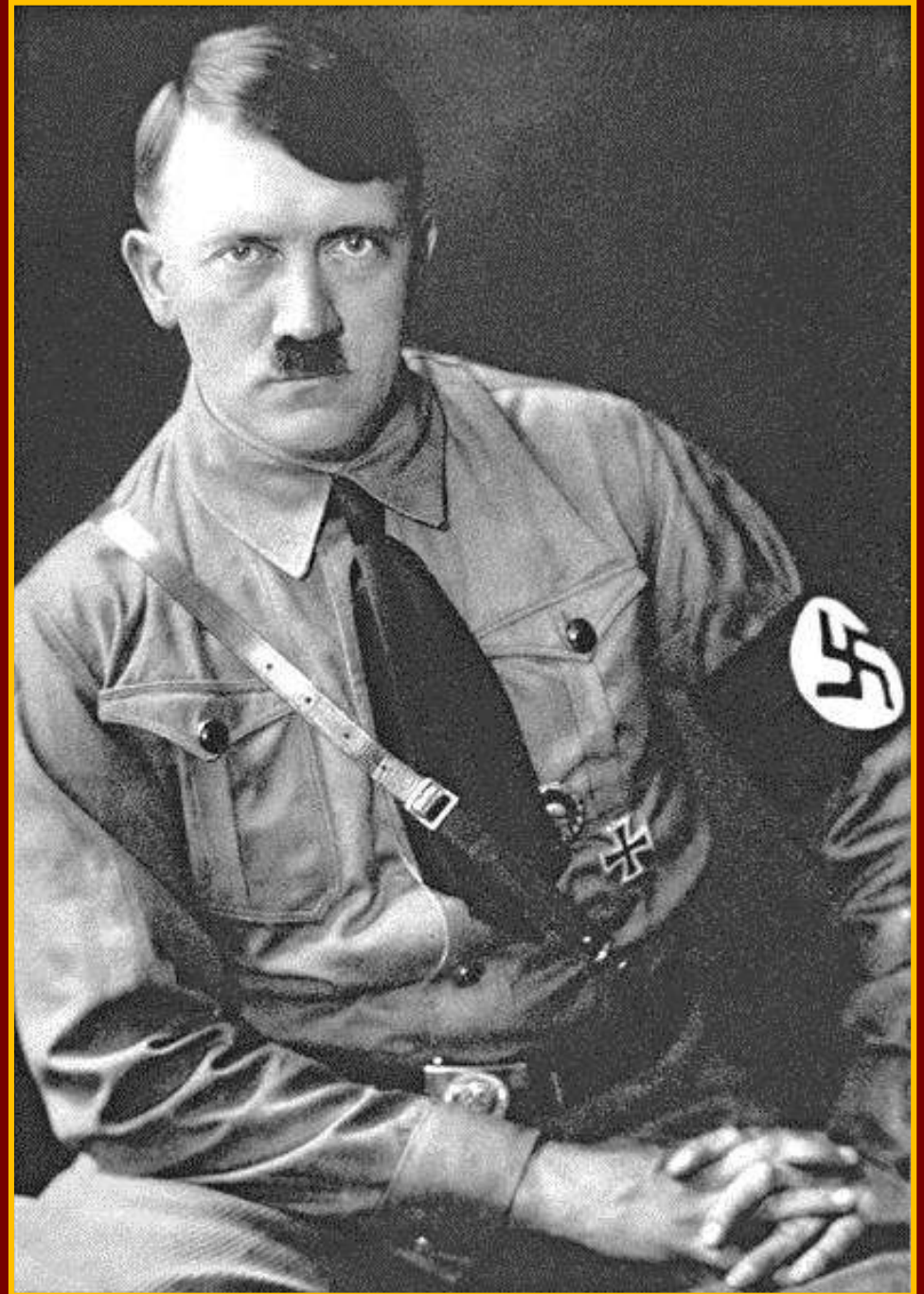
Left: alto recorder manufactured to specifications of Peter Harlan, [ca. 1928?]. Source: Philippe Bolton, “Le renouveau de la flûte à bec,” Internet at <http://www.flute-a-bec.com/flute-a-bec-renouveau.html>



NAZI INDOCTRINATION OF YOUTH

“I am beginning with the young. We older ones are used up... we are bearing the burden of a humiliating past.... But my magnificent youngsters!What material! With them I can make a new world.”

-Adolph Hitler, 1933



Hitler Youth Organizations

Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth) was formed in 1926 as a Nazi organization for teenage boys while this political party grew in power and influence.

By 1933 its organization was as follows (the top-level leader, Baldur von Schirach, reported directly to Hitler):

- Boys 10-14 years, Deutsches Jungvolk (DJ)
- Boys 14-18 years, Hitlerjugend (HJ)
- **Girls 10-14 years, Jungmädelbund (JM)**
- Girls 14-18 years, Bund Deutscher Mädel (BDM)

The oath sworn by all ten-year-olds included “...I swear to devote all my energies and my strength to the savior of our country, Adolph Hitler... I am ... ready to give up my life...”

The Jungmädel

- New girls ages 10 and 11 recruited in April
- Must be “ethnically pure” Germans and without disease or defect
- Small units (10-15 children) meet two or three times a week at Party headquarters, or with similar groups at outdoor sites, for social activities, homemaker training, and Nazi indoctrination
- **“Pure” Aryans are superior! Others are inferior and detestable! We will dominate the world! You must become good Nazi wives and mothers!**
- The girls favored camping, sports, dancing, music; some (maybe most) find Nazi lectures boring, while others find them inspiring (these will become group leaders as they grow older).
- JM represents **fun... excitement... camaraderie**
- After passing a series of “challenges,” the recruits will become full members in October and thereafter entitled to wear the uniform

The **Jungmädel summer uniform** included a white blouse, black neckerchief with brown braided leather knot, and blue pleated skirt. A local unit insignia was worn on the left shoulder. Certain shoes and stockings were also specified, and hair was worn in two braids. Wearing the uniform was encouraged at meetings and required at all public events in which the troop participated.



Sources: (left) image posted on Spartacus Educational, "German Girls' League, <http://spartacus-educational.com/2WWgirls.htm>; (middle) scanned from *Der Jungmädeldienst: Übersicht über Wesen, Form, und Arbeit des Jungmädeldienstes*, posted at <http://bdmhistory.fotki.com/primarysources/manuals/jungmaedel-service/>; (right) AP Images Database, photo # 071017012759.

Service in action: JM and BDM girls gather to chat in a city park while caring for the children of working parents, ca. 1933-1940.

Source: posted at Spartacus Educational, "German Girls' League (Bund Deutscher Mädel). <http://spartacus-educational.com/2WWgirls.htm>



*["Borderland Need Is
the People's Need"]*

Bild 133-237
1933/1939 ca.

Members of the JM march in Worms at a rally for expanding Germany's borders, ca. 1933, Note that not all the girls are in uniform.

Source: Bundesarchiv Bild 133-237, Worms; Internet, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4d/Bundesarchiv_Bild_133_237%2C_Worms%2C_Aufmarsch_der_Deutschen_Jungm%C3%A4del.jpg



Jungmädelbund
members playing
recorders.



Sources: (above) from University of Texas-Austin, Harry Ransom Center, *Hitler Youth Photographs Collection*, #0016.

(right) illustration in Lydia Schürer-Stolle, *So Sind Wir: Jungmädel Erzählen* (Berlin: Junge Generation Verlag, 1937).

Sidebar:

Carl Orff, Gunild Keetman, Recorders, and the Nazis

- Composer Orff and musician/dancer Keetman contribute to the prestige of Güntherschule: innovative integration of music, movement, dance
- Keetmann learns to play the recorder and applies it to her creative work with children
- To remain in their posts they must become Nazis – perhaps “in name only”
- They, and millions of other Germans, had to go through the public motions of loyalty to survive
- Non-participation or non-conformity were risky; opposition and resistance were futile

Music educator Gunild Keetman conducts a celebrated orchestra of young recorder players and percussionists from the famed Günther-Schule at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. Using spectacles such as this, Hitler masked his regime's racist and militarist policies.

Source: Minna Ronnefeld, "Gunild Keetman: Fragments of a Life" in *Gunild Keetman 1904-1990: Ein Leben für Musik und Bewegung....*, ed. Regner and Ronnefeld (Mainz and New York: Schott, 2004), p. 30; this photograph by P. von Hamm is in the collection of Orff-Zentrum München.

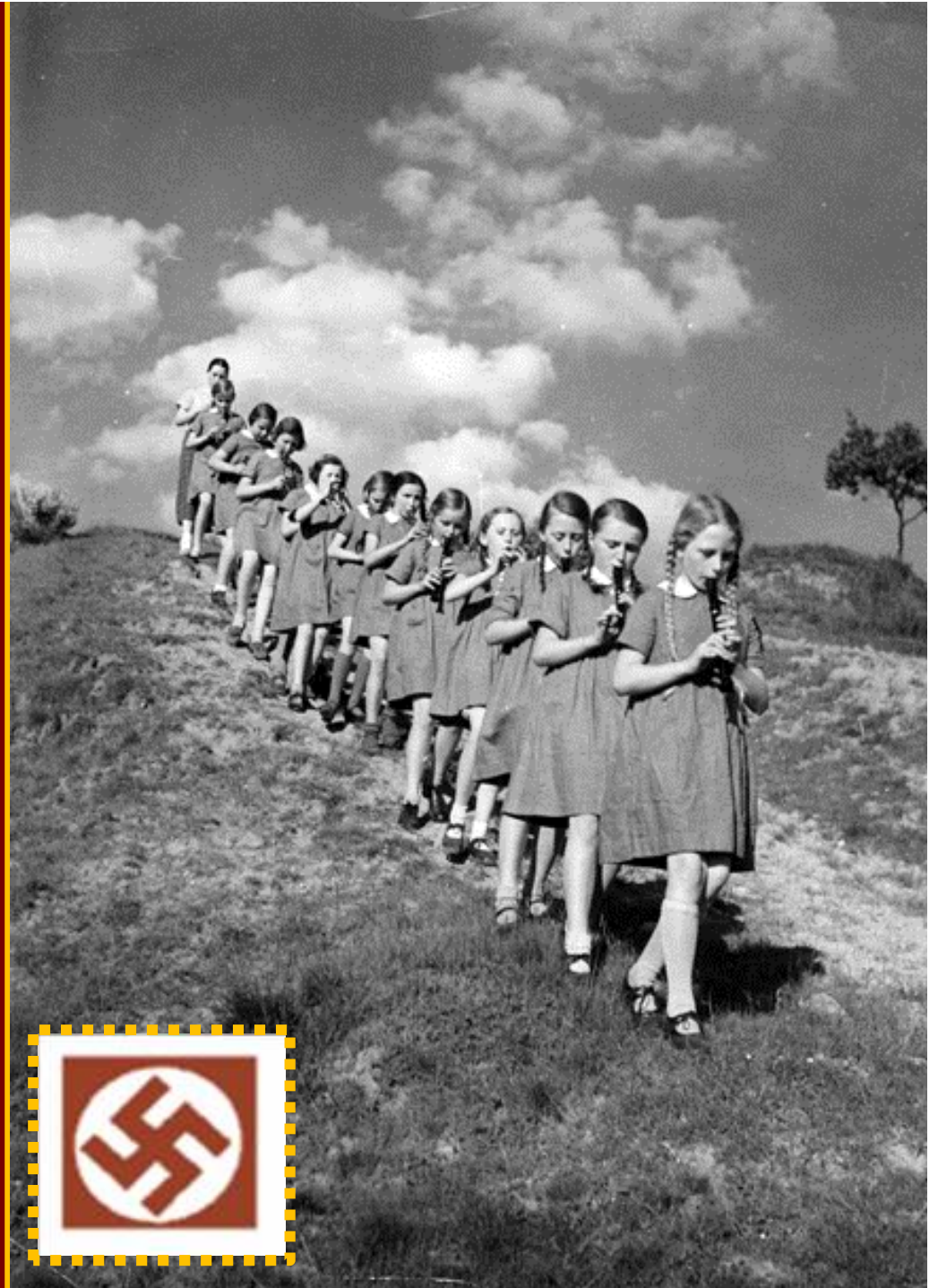


To conclude:

A charming archival photograph, photographer unknown, of young girls playing recorders was labeled and indexed as “Hitler Youth 1933,” although there are no visual clues to support this.

Whether accurate or not, the perhaps sarcastic caption by an unknown annotator allows a retrospective construction of the photograph that gives the outwardly musical subject an ominous and ironic meaning, and reads its message as cautionary.

If it is 1933, YES, they are “Hitler Youth.” All others are banned; by 1936, there will be no choice.



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