

that considerable space is devoted to explaining what the book will do later, rather than folding relevant theories organically into the prose. The book also would have been strengthened through more complete engagement with existing historical scholarship. Considerable work exists on education in prewar and interwar borderlands, which bolsters Venken's findings. While she offers a broad discussion of many of these works in her second chapter, they are not integrated into the book's larger arguments, leaving some important connections undiscussed. These issues do not diminish the overall success of the book, however. Venken offers a valuable contribution to our understanding of the ways in which European states and ordinary people grappled with the challenges of the interwar period and provides a compelling discussion of the development of education in Europe's borderlands.

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Die Hitlerjugend. Geschichte einer überforderten Massenorganisation

By André Postert. Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021. Pp. 458. Cloth \$49.00. ISBN: 978-3525360989.

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André Postert's comprehensive study of the Hitler Youth (HJ) argues that the NSDAP's youth mass organization never lived up to either its aspiration or its self-representation. According to Postert, past studies have often misread propaganda as portrayals of reality, overlooked regional differences, and underestimated the role of individual agency. While readers may disagree with this summative depiction of a vast historiography, Postert's wide-ranging research leaves little doubt that, indeed, "Jugend im Gleichschritt war und ist ein Mythos" (13). This position confirms a considerable body of research that shines light on the gulf between mandate and practice in the Nazi state. Michael Buddrus's *Totale Erziehung für den totalen Krieg* (2003), for example, describes the HJ as a multifaceted construct that perpetually invoked, revised, mobilized, and re-formed the evolving visions and demands of functionaries, members, and detractors alike. Michael Kater's *Hitler Youth* (2004) identifies similar systemic weaknesses in the organizational bureaucracy, while Jill Stephenson's *Hitler's Home Front* (2006) notes the considerable latitude available to both officials and young people in rural communities, and Jaimey Fisher's *Disciplining Germany* (2007) explores how public perceptions shaped postwar *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.

Die Hitlerjugend fits squarely within this literature. Combining diverse officials' reports, a plethora of oral histories and personal narratives, and extensive German-language scholarship, Postert argues that the HJ was overwhelmed primarily by its own vision and expectations. What began as one of numerous party-affiliated youth groups in the late 1920s became a state-sponsored mass organization *because* it couldn't fulfill its promise—to the Nazi party state or to German children. By the mid 1930s, the HJ's structural fragility created systemic problems that were exacerbated by increasing membership numbers. This persistent disconnect between ideological claims, structural demands, and local circumstances, Postert asserts, stymied implementation of one initiative after another, year after year, in district after district.

The book's structure is, broadly speaking, chronological: three sections reflect traditional periodization. The thematic structure of each section's 3-5 chapters, however, prioritize the more gradual transformation of lived experience over abrupt political turning points. Chapter 1 of section I, titled *Genese einer Massenorganisation*, for example, frames the early HJ as one of numerous initiatives *for* (and occasionally led by) youth and describes a differentiated, even erratic approach to recruitment both before and after the *Machtergreifung*. Chapter 2 mines materials from leisure organizations and schools to show how particular functionaries and communities reframed Nazification into a web of disjointed efforts to homogenize youth culture; per Postert, this scattershot approach succeeded neither before nor after 1933. Similarly, attempts to secure interorganizational cooperation rarely kept pace with the vicissitudes of the HJ's changing membership and responsibilities.

Section II, *Anspruch und Realität der Hitlerjugend*, depicts an increasingly bloated bureaucracy wrestling with an "erschütterndes Bild sittlicher Verfehlungen" (177). Postert's attention to detail shines here, demonstrating that despite stirring film footage and breathless eyewitness accounts, there was no honeymoon period for the Hitler Youth. Rather, according to this section's chapter 1, institutionalization cost the organization its revolutionary allure and undermined its "youth led by youth" policy. These troubles, as chapters 2 and 3 show, impeded recruitment efforts, disrupted political indoctrination, threatened tacit agreements with the churches, and hurt relations with local law enforcement. The section's fourth chapter could easily stand alone as a seminar reading, as it explores tensions among these competing interests through a close analysis of the HJ's *Jugendheim* initiative. While propagandists showcased modern recreation centers built to integrate political, physical, and cultural learning, Postert demonstrates that, even on paper, *Jugendheim* projects often antagonized local officials, who faced competing municipal needs. Subsequent construction delays, Postert suggests, further disillusioned HJ members and recruits, contributing to the state's decision to sharpen the *Jugenddienstpflicht*, despite warnings that mobilization by mandate would simultaneously frustrate activists and inundate the HJ with apathetic youth.

Section III, *Massenmobilisierung*, explores the exacerbation of these issues as wartime demands stretched material and human resources. Postert supports the established claim that, while the Reichsjugendführer (RJF) claimed "full mobilization" of youth in late 1943, authorities at all levels acknowledged wide-ranging non-compliance (279, 295). Chapter 2 of this section combines prescriptive materials and juvenile court records to provide a richly differentiated analysis of the wartime *Jugendverwahrlosung* that featured so prominently in postwar youth work. Even a decade into Nazi rule, Postert writes, "fiel es schwer, die Manipulationen aufzudecken und Mitglieder zu kontrollieren. Erwachsene Passanten sprangen Jugendlichen bei Kontrollen bei, manche gaben sich spontan als Erziehungsberechtigte aus, während die Eltern wiederum Falschangaben deckten, da—wie die RJF lamentierte—sie offenbar ‚Bestrafungen als schickanöse Härte‘ empfanden" (357). Chapter 3 is equally rich and considerably more sobering. Faced with burgeoning delinquency rates, the Interior Ministry ordered *Jugendämter* and courts to differentiate between genetically healthy at-risk youth and those deemed irredeemable due to genetic or mental deficiency. Section III ends by engaging the longstanding debate over the voluntary nature of HJ membership. Here again, Postert highlights the contingency of regional contexts and individual choice, both of which he rightly notes persisted through the war years—and arguably even after "die grösste Jugendorganisation, die es in der deutschen Geschichte je gegeben hatte, sang- und klanglos von der Bildfläche" (409).

After such a detail-rich exploration of the HJ as myth, institution, and experience, Postert's conclusion comes as a bit of an afterthought, particularly given the rich literature on youth and reeducation in the interregnum era and the increasingly interdisciplinary field of memory studies. The author's summary of Allied occupation policies highlights the success of propaganda on international audiences; although never actualized, the myth of a unified and radicalized generation shaped these occupation policies and global opinion.

Overall, Postert's history of the Hitler Youth is the work of a careful scholar well-versed in an overwhelming source base. The book's focus on dysfunctionality may leave novice readers wondering what the HJ *did* accomplish and to what extent specific constituencies were taken in by the propaganda. Also unclear is the reasoning behind Postert's choice of examples. While they demonstrate widespread shortcomings, might a more systematic approach complicate the narrative of organizational failure? Such questions notwithstanding, *Die Hitlerjugend* is a rich and eminently readable study and clearly animates the scholarly consensus that lived experience resists both structural confines and propagandists' reductionism. This message seems particularly salient in the current age, as extremists again strive to oversimplify multifaceted realities.

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Prison Elite: How Austrian Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg Survived Nazi Captivity

**By Erika Rummel. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021.
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Those familiar with the origins of World War II know that on February 12, 1938 Austrian chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg met face to face with Hitler at Berchtesgaden. Here the Führer browbeat Schuschnigg into appointing Austrian Nazis to his cabinet. On March 9, Schuschnigg attempted to pull his chestnuts out of the fire by calling for a plebiscite on Austrian independence. This was too much for the Nazi dictator. Two days later, German troops invaded Austria, where they were rapturously received by the population. There were many reasons why a majority of Austrians welcomed the Anschluss, although scholars concur that Schuschnigg himself must bear a share of the blame. After all, he had outlawed and persecuted the Social Democrats in such a way as to drive many of them to support the indigenous Nazi party.

But what happened to Schuschnigg? Briefly imprisoned by the Gestapo, he disappeared from public view, his whereabouts known only by a handful of relatives. In 1945, he was freed by the Allies, amazingly healthy and well dressed. In this remarkable book, Erika Rummel explains how and why Schuschnigg survived as a privileged prisoner in the Third Reich. Shortly after the Anschluss, the Nazis placed him in solitary confinement at the Hotel Metropole in Vienna. In November 1938, he was transferred to Gestapo headquarters in Munich. Although under surveillance in both locations, he was incarcerated in cells resembling modest living rooms and permitted to go for brief walks and enjoy weekly visitations with his second wife, whom he had married in 1938. The couple had a daughter in March 1941. In December of that year, Schuschnigg was transferred to Sachsenhausen concentration camp, assigned a small house, and permitted to live with his wife and daughter until shortly before the end of the war.

Relying on several, often contradictory editions of Schuschnigg's memoirs as well a trove of diary entries and personal letters, Rummel brilliantly describes and analyzes how Schuschnigg attempted to cope psychologically with his personal plight and to explain to himself why he had failed as chancellor. She devotes just under two-thirds of her study