

Examine sources	Part 1, Chapter 12: 'The Courage of Children who opposed Nazis'	Get pupils to read each story out loud (below) and discuss. Identify the signs that National Socialism was dangerous and why.	20 mins
Reflect	Discussion	<p>What did you think about the German people's role in the rise of Hitler? Has the discussion changed the way you think?</p> <p>Hilda had to push past the guards to confront the local Nazi leader and explain that you can do things "If you are angry enough?" What things could or should make us angry today and will that spur us into action?</p> <p>Class discussion.</p>	4 mins

BACKGROUND ON AMY BULLER AND 'DARKNESS OVER GERMANY'

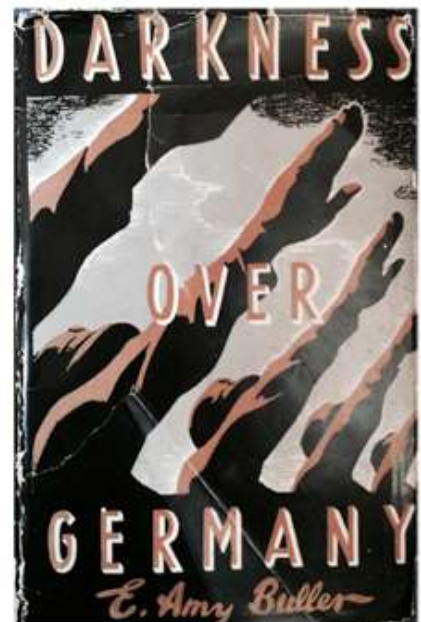
At a time when few women were involved in public life, Amy Buller's story is unusual and intriguing. In the 1930s she organised meetings between the Germans and British, hoping to improve understanding between the nations at such a time of uncertainty.

Her work was particularly controversial, as it involved figures such as [Alfred Rosenberg](#), one of the leading creators of the Nazi belief system, including the persecution of the Jews and the superiority of the Aryan race.

Buller's association with people such as Rosenberg and von Ribbentrop, and her insistence on persisting with travel to Germany and cross-cultural discussions as war loomed large, almost certainly led to her attracting the attention of MI5.

After the outbreak of war, Buller shared her experiences in Germany with her students in Liverpool and encouraged them to think critically about the threat and appeal of Nazism to young people. She was encouraged to write a book about it and in 1943, *Darkness over Germany* was published.

The Queen Mother read the book and was so impressed that she and the King gave her the use of Cumberland Lodge (the home of Roald Dahl's the Big Friendly Giant) in Windsor Great Park to set up an educational foundation to continue her work of encouraging critical thinking about important issues.



The Courage of Children who Opposed Nazis

Darkness over Germany, part I, chapter 12, pp. 106-115

In the chapter 'The Courage of Children who Opposed Nazis', Amy Buller provides four pictures of young Germans acting in defiance of Nazi culture. At least three of the four young people had joined Nazi youth groups. All of them, however, use their critical thinking skills and courage to take a stand against Nazism.

Esther and her little brother Fritz

The 11 year old Esther didn't like to be forced to sing Nazi songs, so she opened the window and she and her 6 year old brother sang proudly and loudly to "let other people know that we are as proud to sing our Christian hymns as the Nazis are to sing their songs."

But then, Esther's little brother Fritz built a street scene with bricks and spat into it, explaining, "That man in the street is a Jew and the teacher at school said we should spit when we pass Jews on the street."

Hilda

Hilda was a teenager, and a member of the Hitler Maids.

Hilda was shocked one morning, when someone she knew, a friend's father, had been sent to prison by the Nazis. She was then forced to listen at school to a speech, "against the Jews and against Christian pastors who did not agree that Adolf Hitler is like a second Christ. It was terrible...what he said, and if that is what the Party does I will not belong to it."

Hilda was late for a family lunch. When she finally arrived we discover that she had forced her way into the house of the local Nazi leader and told him, "I, and many like me will leave the Party and we hate him and if he goes on like that we will hate Hitler too in the end, and I told him he could send me to prison if he liked."

Her mother asked her how she had managed to get past all the guards and she said, "You can do things if you are angry enough."

15 Year Old Schoolgirl

During a lesson, a Nazi teacher described the Treaty of Versailles, which ended the First World War, as “the most vindictive and brutal treaty of modern times”.

At the end of the class our schoolgirl bravely asks, “what sort of treaty do you think the Germans would have made if they had won the war?”. The teacher was furious and sent her out of the classroom.

Later that evening, she and four school friends met at her house and, according to her Mum, spent 2 hours in hysterics. They borrowed a sheet of drawing paper, red sealing wax and ribbon and wrote out the imagined treaty. The next morning they left it on the teacher’s desk with a note saying, that this was the treaty Germany might have made against England and France, and that they had found the [Treaty of Brest-Litovsk](#) a great help.

“We are bored young Germans. That teacher goes on and on with her propaganda till we nearly go mad. Now we hope she will change a little. Anyhow it was great fun to make her so angry.”

Johann

16 year old Johann was a member of the Hitler Youth. In November 1938, during the notorious *Kristallnacht* pogrom, Johann was shocked to see elderly Jews being beaten in the street by SS men as his school mates jeered.

Soon after, when Johann’s school gathered for a Christmas celebration, the local Nazi leader made a coarse speech and a got the school to sing an anti-Jewish song, followed by the infamous Nazi anthem, the ‘Horst Wessel’ <https://www.anesi.com/east/horstw.htm>.

Immediately Johann, whose attitude to Nazism had changed as a result of these experiences, pushed his way through to the piano and nervously began to play ‘Silent Night’. Some boys hummed along. After rushing home from school, Johann then resigned from the Hitler Youth, despite knowing this meant he would not be allowed to attend university, a life-long dream.