

# TEACHERS ASK STUDENTS TO WRITE LETTERS TO HITLER



Wilhelm Becket (Becker) was a German elementary school teacher. He had the children in his class write Christmas letters to Hitler and pleaded with Hitler's half-sister, Angela Raubal, to deliver the Christmas greetings to Hitler on their behalf.

In December 1933, he wrote:

Dear Gracious lady!

My schoolchildren have taken extraordinary pains to give our beloved Leader and Reich Chancellor a little joy on Christmas and have written and illustrated their Christmas letters with great devotion and care.

We, as teachers, ask our students to write to government officials and political candidates.

Why do we do this? What is the purpose of this exercise? What are the implications of a lesson like this?

In both form and content they are entirely the intellectual production of each individual child, and from the fineness of the composition you will be able to see the feeling of happiness that has inspired each individual child. The portfolio was sent to you yesterday. I beg you to receive it.

Your brother will certainly take a few days off from the exertions of political life and seek rest and relaxation in the stillness of your mountain landscape.

We know how much he loves children; so many delightful pictures show us that.

I would like to ask you most cordially in the name of my schoolchildren to lay the portfolio before him during some leisure hour. Perhaps the tender little work of the Odenwald village children will become a Christmas radiance for him.

With German Christmas greetings!  
For the Hornbach Elementary School,  
Wilh. Becket

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Angela Raubal, with her half-brother, Adolf Hitler. *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München/Bildarchiv*

Am 23. Januar 1934 hatte Becker jedoch bereits bei Angela Raubal nachgehakt.

*Sehr verehrte gnädige Frau!*

Schon alle die Tage, seit der Unterricht wieder begonnen hat, schauen mich meine Kinder mit großen, fragenden Augen an, und gar manches kam schon geschlichen und wagte zage das Wort: »Hat er schon geschrieben?«

Sie werden es mir nicht verübeln, wenn ich, als der geistige Sachwalter für 47 kleine Leute, heute bei Ihnen anfrage, ob unsere Weihnachtsmappe für den Herrn Reichskanzler, die wir am 20. Dez. 33 zur Post gaben, noch rechtzeitig in Ihre Hand gelangte und ob es Ihnen möglich war, sie Ihrem Herrn Bruder über die Feiertage vorzulegen. Dass er zum Jahreswechsel außerordentlich viel zu tun hatte, können wir uns sehr gut vorstellen. Es wäre für meine Kinder jedoch sehr schmerzlich, wenn das Geschenk, das sie aus ganzem Herzen und mit Hingabe aller ihrer inneren Kräfte schufen, nicht imstande wäre, die Aufgabe zu lösen, die sie sich gesetzt: unserem Führer 5 Minuten Freude zu bereiten.

Meine Kinder sind nicht ungeduldig, aber ich empfinde es immer so stark, wie ihre kleinen Herzen der Resonanz entgegenzittern, die ihre Gabe bei unserem Führer auslöst. Verschiedene kamen schon beglückt zu mir, sie hätten von ihm geträumt; eines der Kleinen schon Kanzler die Dorfst

Besonders stark lich ein Freund da Blauen Blume vorl aller Herzen, der beglückt, ist doch Es drängt mich schicken.

Tun Sie damit, Meine Kinder Wort über das Sc leins erfüllen.



Above left: Letter from Wilhem Becket to Angela Raubal, January 23, 1934. *Henrik Eberle, Briefe an Hitler (Berlin: Bastei Lübbe, 2007)*. Right: Translation of letter from Wilhem Becket to Angela Raubal, January 23, 1934. *Henrik Eberle, Letters to Hitler (New York: Wiley, 2012)* Above: Hitler poses with children during an election campaign in 1932. The original caption reads, "One always sees the Fuehrer surrounded by children in pictures." *US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Richard Freimark*

When Mr. Becket did not receive an immediate reply, he wrote again:

Dear Gracious Lady!

Every day since classes have begun again, my children look at me with big questioning eyes, and some of them have even slipped up to me and shyly asked: 'has he written yet?'

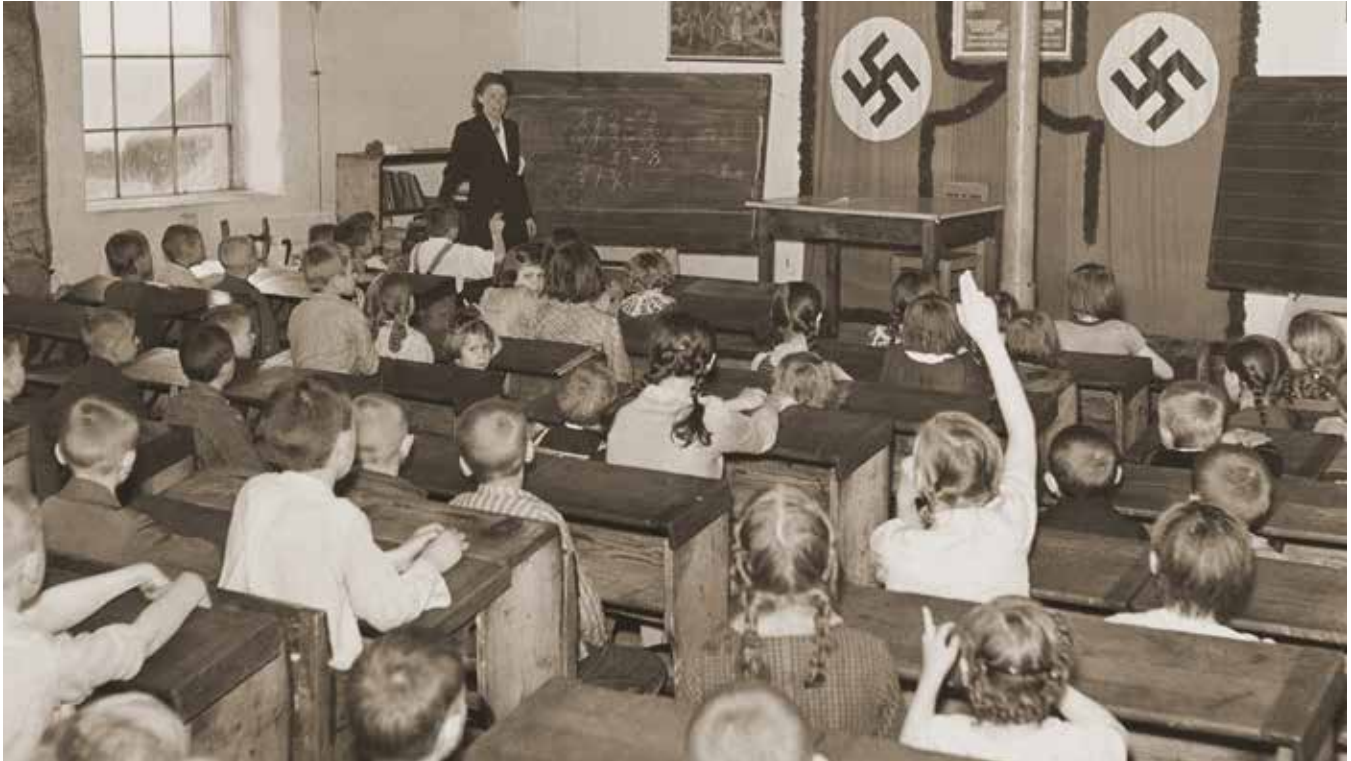
You won't hold it against me, if, as the intellectual custodian for 47 little people, I ask you today whether our Christmas portfolio for the Mr. Reich Chancellor, which we put in the mail on 20 December 1933, reached you on time and whether it was possible for you to present it to your brother over the holidays. That he had an exceptional number of things to do at the turn of the year we can very easily imagine. But it would be very painful for my children if the gift that they created with all their hearts and with the devotion of all their inner energies was not able to perform the task that they had set themselves to give our Leader five minutes of joy.

My children are not impatient, but I still feel so strongly how their little hearts quivered in response to the echo to which their gift gave rise in our Leader. Several of them have already come to tell me with delight that had dreamed of him; one of the little ones had already done so three times. And they are constantly seeing the Chancellor coming up the village street!

This feeling of togetherness was particularly strong when a friend recently read to us a splendid little book, *The Secret Garden*. It could be seen in every eye and it sprang from every heart that the royal son who thus frees his people and makes it happy is none other than Adolph Hitler.

I hasten now to send you the delightful little book. Do with it whatever you wish. My children would be overjoyed to hear what happened to their portfolio and perhaps also the book.

With a German salute!  
Wilh. Becket



A student raises her hand during a math lesson in a one-room school in Bohemia. The front of the classroom is draped with swastikas and a poster of Adolf Hitler is surrounded by Hitler aphorisms. *Deutsches Historisches Museum GmbH*

Eventually, Mr. Becket's letter was forwarded to Berlin along with other mail. Hitler's private office replied on February 27, 1934.

Dear Mr. Becket!

Mrs. Raubal forwarded your letter of 18 December of this year to us for reply. The Leader received the portfolio and took great pleasure in it.

He sends you and the children his heartfelt thanks. He would like to write each of the children personally, but he is extremely busy and unfortunately cannot do so.

With a German salute!  
Albert Borman"

It was implied that teachers would urge their pupils to send gifts to Hitler. Refusal to do so, by either the teacher or student, could result in social exclusion, being denounced, or being attacked.

Social pressure was deliberate and coincided with Christmas and Hitler's birthday. He received hundreds of such portfolios for these occasions.