**Weimar and Nazi Germany 20 mark Question arguments**

2

**Argument:** The opposition to the Nazis failed to have any impact 1933-1939

**Exemplar question:** How far do you agree with interpretation 2 about how little resistance and opposition to Hitler and the Nazis in Germany in the years 1933-39.

**Interpretation 2.**

**From a report of 1937 by the German Socialist Party in exile (SOPADE)**

It becomes increasingly clear that the majority of the people have two faces; one which they show to their good and reliable acquaintances; and the other for the authorities, the Party officers, keen Nazis for strangers. The private face shows the sharpest criticism of everything that is going on now; the official one shows optimism and contentment.

**Interpretation 1.**

From The Nazi Dictatorship, by Ian Kershaw published in 1985

The Churches offered less than fundamental resistance to Nazism. Their energies were used in opposing Nazi interference with their traditional practices. This was not matched by equally vigorous denunciation of Nazi inhumanity

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| Arguments to support resistance and opposition | Arguments to challenge resistance and opposition |
| * In the years 1933-39 1.3 million people were sent to concentration camps in Germany – seem to indicate widespread opposition to the regime.
* 300,000 left Germany to live in other countries = dissatisfaction with the Nazis
* **Army**: late 1938, some army leaders planned to overthrow Hitler but following his successful takeover of parts of Czechoslovakia, the plan was set aside.
* **Assassination attempts:** 3 attempts before 1939 all failed as either didn’t take the shot or the last one a bomb went off after Hitler had left the building.
* **Youth:** Hitler Youth not popular by all – didn’t accept Nazi ideas.
* Mid 1930s gangs began to appear on street corners – played their own music, grew their hair long, wore own choice of clothes as a rebellion against regimentation of Nazi ideas. – looked for members of Hitler Youth to beat them up. E.g. Edelweiss Pirates and The Swing Youth (listened to American Swing bands, drinking alcohol and smoking)
* **Church: Protestant** – Pastor Martin Niemoller opposed control of the Church created Confessional Church which followed traditional German Protestantism. Membership fell when pastors were persecuted by Nazis – Niemoller was arrested in 1937, tried and kept in prison and concentration camps until 1945.
* **Catholic** – tension Nazis censored press and harassed some of the priests. 1937 Pope issued a letter to all Catholic priests to read to their congregation where he attacked the Nazi system – clearly showing they were trying to resist the Nazi attempts to control the Church
 | * Many Germans gained from Hitler’s successes after 1933 – able to maintain support – economic growth, international standing grew, some Germans happy to see communists and Socialist leaders removed.
* **Army:** Hitler removed certain generals who had criticised his foreign policy aims – removed 16 in all thus tightened his grip on the army.
* **Youth:** Edelweiss Pirates/Swing Youth – actions were very limited – illegal dances, beating up Hitler Youth, anti-Nazi graffiti, anti-Nazi jokes – they did little to oppose the Nazis. Only after 1939 when the war broke out did they make physical attacks on the government.
* **Church:** opposition was limited – opposition amongst ordinary Christians was muted. They attended church, in defiance to the Nazis – some publically applauded Church leaders who opposed, but there were few Christians who were brave, or foolish enough to oppose the Nazis openly. **(Interpretation 1)**
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**Conformity** is going along with something, **resistance** is going against it and **opposition** is trying to destroy it.

What factors would make the German people conform? Fear, propaganda, Gestapo, concentration camps, liked Nazi ideals!