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

2

**Argument: The impact of religious opposition**

**The problem of religion was easy for the Nazis to deal with because the main religions failed to oppose the Nazis**

**Exemplar question:** How far do you agree with Interpretation 2 about the effectiveness of opposition of the Church in Nazi Germany

**Interpretation 1.**

The Protestant church did make some attempt to oppose Nazi control. Martin Niemoller should be remembered for his courage and bravery in speaking out against the Nazis. Niemoller set up the ‘Confessional Church’ supported by more than 6,000 pastors. This church followed traditional German Protestantism and not the preaching’s of Hitler much to the dislike of the Nazi party. The Nazi attempt to destroy the Protestant opposition created martyrs.

\*Martyrs (People who suffer for the cause)

**Interpretation 2.**

The Protestant church made a poor attempt an opposing the Nazis, many were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Niemoller was arrested in 1937, he was tried and kept in prison and sent to Dachau concentration camp where he was held until 1945. Many Catholic priests suffered the same fate at least 400 were sent to concentration camps where they were put into a special block at Dachau. The harsh consequences for speaking out against the party kept any opposition from the church at bay.

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| Arguments to support The Church **did** oppose the Nazis effectively  | Arguments to challenge The Church did not oppose the Nazis effectively  |
| * Confessional Church was set up under Martin Niemoller = 6000 pastors.
* He criticised Hitler over the radio and helped oppose the euthanasia programme.
* Neimoller survived the war and became a symbol of opposition
* Agnes von Grone spoke out against the Nazis and lead the Protestant Women’s Bureau
* Although the Pope did sign the Concordat in 1933 by 1937 Pope Pius XI wrote a letter criticising the Nazi party ‘With Burning Anxiety’.
* Priests showed this letter to their congregations in an attempt to resist the Nazi party
* Catholic churches remained packed with worshipers every Sunday
* Catholics owed their first allegiance to the Pope and not Hitler
 | * 1933 Concordant with the Catholic Church = Hitler promising not to interfere with the Church (they can keep Catholic schools and symbols and freedom to worship) and the church will keep out of politics.
* By 1937 Hitler had broken his promises and Christian symbols had been removed from schools, Catholic schools shut down and the Catholic Youth was banned.
* 400 priests in Dachau.
* In 1933 the Protestant groups that supported the Nazis set up the Reich Church (Muller was leader. 2 000 pastors)
* The keenest members of the Reich Church wore Nazi uniforms and gave the Nazi salute their motto was ‘The swastika on our chests and the Cross in our hearts’
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**Other information:**

This question focused on how the church opposed the Nazi party. You may also get a question that asks about **how the Nazis used the church to control and influence people.**

Key points to include

* Hitler set up the Ministry of Church affairs in 1935 in an attempt to weaken the hold the Catholic and Protestant churches had on people
* The German faith movement was set up to replace Christian values and ceremonies with pagan (non- Christian) ideas (only 5% of the population joined)
* Many Catholics supported Hitler because of his opposition to communism
* There were catholic schools and youth movements were closed down
* The Reich Church was established to combine all protestants under one Church – Muller became the Reich Bishop in 1933