

# MODERN HISTORY

**Assess the impact of Nazism on youth, women, and religion in the period 1933-1939.**

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## Essay Plan

**Introduction:** Make a judgement based on the impact of Nazism on youth, women, and religion

**Body:** 1. Impacts of Nazism on Youth  
2. Impacts of Nazism on Women  
3. Impacts of Nazism on Religion

**Conclusion:** A judgement based on each aspect of life in regards to youth, women and religion

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The impact of Nazism on youth, women and religion in the period 1933-1939 was of significance as it entailed major changes for the lives of certain groups within German society. The impact of Nazism can be seen through the enactment of certain regulatory policies which assisted in revolutionising Germany as a collective entity, underpinned by the notion of Volksgemeinschaft. The effects of Nazism on the German youth was of major significance as it indoctrinated the minds of the youth and brought about the establishment of Hitler Jugend. The women of Germany faced greater changes as their lives were now dictated by the very basis of Nazi ideology. Furthermore religion was also subject to significant changes as it modified the very basis by which the Germans lived. In saying this, from the evidence documented Nazism indeed had a profound impact on youth, women and religion in the period of 1933-1939.

The concept of Volksgemeinschaft was an initial movement that signified the sweeping changes that Nazism brought upon Germany. The concept aimed to create a new peoples community based on what the Nazis saw as the traditional values of German people.

Nazism can be seen as an influential weapon when examining the impact it had on the lives of German youth. A lasting transformation of society required the Nazis to capture the minds of young people and indoctrinate them with Nazi ideology. The Hitler youth had originally been set up in 1926, with the basic aim to engineer and indoctrinate the future of the Aryan race and to preserve racial purity. However it was not till the appointment of Baldur Von Schirach as leader in July 1933 that the organisation began to develop rapidly and set about the foundation of Nazi ideology. The Hitler youth was a systematic organisation that consolidated important aspects of German life and incorporated this into the lives of many youth through education. The layout of the organisation was of significance as it encapsulated the different stages of life. For example, boys and girls aged between 14-18 were officially regarded as Hitler Youth providing extensive knowledge such training for boys with the prospect of becoming soldiers and activities such as physical culture and domestic science aimed to prepare girls to become future mothers of Germany. Values in the Hitler Youth supported Duty obedience, and conformity, whereas individuality was downplayed. According to historian Michael Kater Nazi Germany represented a 'marital society where entire youth culture was systematically contaminated with concepts of intolerance and oppression of the physically weak'.

In 1933 just under 30% of children aged 10-18 in Germany were members of Hitler Youth. The impact of Nazism sought to change this by passing the Hitler youth law in December 1936 which made membership compulsory and brought the number of memberships to 62%. However, this still was not enough and by 1939 further regulations were introduced, contributing to the 80% membership due to a second Hitler youth law. The compulsory membership enforced by Nazism did not prevent approximately 1.5 million children between the ages of 10-18 from becoming non-members. Nazis took a dim look over those who found leaks in the regulative laws but more particularly those who formed their own groups. This can be supported by the claims made by

historian Michael Burleigh who believes that the pressure to conform to Hitler Youth, formed resistance youth group. From the evidence provided the impact of Nazism on youth created drastic changes within Germany in the period 1933-1939.

Alongside the impact marked by the Nazi regime on the youth of Germany, women were also subject to significant changes that took place in the period 1933-1939. Nazis believed in racial purity and the preservation of the Aryan race which was why the women's role was significant. Women served a higher purpose as of producing healthy Aryan children and were seen as a central image in Nazi ideology. In the period of 1933-1936 married women were banned from top professional jobs such as that of doctors, lawyers, etc. Furthermore the law for promotion of marriage was enacted as it encouraged the act of marriage by providing incentives of 1000 Reich mark loan with 25% subtracted from debt with each child. This indeed highlighted the need for women to marry as a means of producing healthy Aryan children in order for the creation of a greater Germany to be established. The importance of women in the workforce was at the expense of the production of children hence the government enacted policies that prompted 800,000 women leaving the workforce during 1933-1935. Overall the Nazi attitude towards women was summed up through their slogan 'Kinde, Kuche and Kirch' which suggested that the role of women was to provide a strong support network at home, developing and raising healthy Aryan children to serve the interest of the nation and the Nazi ideology.

The importance of religion can be seen as another aspect in German life that sought to change as a result of Nazi impact in the period of 1933-1939. Nazis had a completely different set of beliefs compared to Christianity. With the churches humanitarian outlook and care for the poor and weak, this indeed ran on the contrary to the Nazi ideology of a racially based struggle and the survival of the fittest. This meant the eradication of such beliefs were needed to secure a society conformed to the notions incorporated within Nazi ideology. Nevertheless, approx. 30% of the population were devoted Christians; hence Hitler knew the importance of religion as it controlled a large portion of the population. Generally the churches conformed to the Nazi regime; however there were pockets of resistance from the Mormons that strongly were anti-Nazi. Following this, there were attempts to introduce Nazi ideas into religion, including ideas such as banning the Old Testament on the grounds that it was a Jewish book. Alongside this the Nazis attempted to introduce Nazi teachings in Catholic schools, tried to ban the crucifix in Catholic churches and banned Catholic newspapers. This indeed reinforced the impact that Nazism had on religion, as it removed certain principles that guided the very basis of Christianity. On the contrary, the Nazis never quite succeeded in bringing the Protestant Church entirely under their control. This brought about the need for an agreement which was then further established with the concordant signed between the Nazis and the pope in 1933, guaranteeing the independence of the Catholic church, providing they did not interfere in the political life of the state. Though Nazism marked a profound impact on religion it failed to eradicate the basis of Christianity and establish a belief based on the teachings of Nazi ideology.

The effects of Nazism upon youth, women and religion can be seen as having brought about major changes in the period of 1933-1939. This can be seen through the modifications made to policies in regards to Hitler youth laws, marriage laws that now dictated the lives of many women and the implementation of Nazi belief as a substitute to the beliefs presented within Christianity. Hence as highlighted from the evidence presented we can therefore say that Nazism in fact brought about sweeping changes to all aspects of lives especially to that of the youth, women and religion in the period of 1933-1939.