

# [The nature and extent of opposition to the nazi regime](https://assignbuster.com/the-nature-and-extent-of-opposition-to-the-nazi-regime/)

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The Nazi regime was just that, a regime, it was dictated to the people through various means and consequently opposition followed. It was upon this opposition that the success of the party would be determined. However, to determine the opposition themselves could promote a weak or scarce opposition which in turn would benefit them ten fold.

The Churches were the only organizations allowed to retain organisational autonomy in Nazi Germany, so it could be said the nature of the Church was not to promote anti-Nazi ideas but instead to allow people the opportunity to practice their religion.

The first antagonisms came when the Nazi regime wanted a centralized and unified Protestant Church. They would use their involvement to influence and infiltrate Nazi ideas within the Church. The extent of opposition by the Church was consequently sparked; it came from a dissident group dubbed the 'Confessional Church'. This form of opposition was not as conspiratorial as others; members were legitimate and stood for what they believed. The crack down was quite straight forward for the Nazis, which demonstrated the openness of this type of resistance; the majority of members were in concentration camps by 1937.

Religion played a key part in peoples' lives, because of this nature much could be expected from it as an opposition. Consequently the extent of the success would be held in the hands of the people. However due to the overwhelming pressures in society created by the Nazis, successful opposition through the Church would be an impossibility for many. According to source three resistance can not be in the eye of the public, it must be conspiratorial and cannot be built on the foundations of normal life. Therefore religion alone as an opposition could never assert itself successfully enough to overcome the torrid constraints of Nazism. Also, it must be said that there were many people who remained less than complete supporters but the movement had touched the lives of the majority of the Germans so they were compelled into at least a partial conformity with what was on offer.

Resistance came from within the army too, it was a strong base for opposition and the close links the resistors had with Hitler would prove very useful. The nature of the resistances differed in form but the extent in which they were hoped to be carried out was the same; overthrow Hitler and the Nazi regime.

The Beck- Goerdeler group was at the forefront of army resistance to the Nazi regime. The leading figures were conservative and they were worried that Hitler might engineer a war over the desire of Sudeten Germany to join the third Reich. They wanted Hitler replaced and rejected methods of the Nazis. They did not want Germany to become a second rate power and took it for granted that a post war German government would dominate Central Europe.

The extent of this opposition came to head when emissaries were sent to Britain to warn the British government of Hitler's aggressive plans against Czechoslovakia. This was a common form of resistance to try and gain a collectively stronger and more active source of help.

A number of foreign office diplomats worked closely with the resistance and they too looked for a diplomatic agreement with Britain for assistance. However, the extent of this was certainly a risk for the conspirators but if people were willing and able then the extent of opposition would have been paramount. This highlights the deceptive power of the Nazi's and the true extent of the conspiratorial opposition; altogether an unfortunate strength of constraints that could never promote an extensive resistance.

It could be said that the extent of opposition was deeming itself pointless. Mass opposition was not an option and assistance from elsewhere seemed unlikely. Understandably certain opposers began to acknowledge the only option left to stop Hitler and the regime was to take matters into their own hands.

Many of the Nazis were disillusioned by what they had seen and saw killing Hitler as the only option. There were six unsuccessful attempts but the most important was the bomb plot of 1944 by the members of the Bech- Goerdeler group.

This allowed the Nazi regime to crush the complete network of elite resistant groups with approximately 5000 opponents being executed. This marked the end of any firm resistance within the army.

Another form of resistance was that of the communists; they were a strong opponent before the 1933 election, but were crushed once Hitler came to office. The nature of the resistance was not as extreme as the nature of the disillusioned army officers but rather because of political or moral principles.

The extent of communist opposition was on a relatively low level producing anti- Nazi literature and graffiti. They did cause the Nazis some concern but were too loosely organized and few in number to ever really effect the regime.

The Social Democrats formed another type of opposition but it was similar to that of the Communists. They lacked finance and leadership which affected the extent of their opposition.

This type of opposition could be echoed in the principles of the 'White Rose Movement' or other youth groups. The regime attempted to brainwash the youth of Germany, but for those who were unscathed they had the ability to recognize the importance of informing people about opposing Nazism, by way of leaflets. Others simply did not like the constraints of the regime and largely opted to enjoy themselves and cause some trouble. This can be seen in the 'Swing Youth' and 'Edelweiss Pirates'. As in source two there were whole areas of behaviour that normally lie below the threshold of police intervention and surely these forms did. However, by this time the concept of Nazism did not fair kindly to any type of resistance let alone largely private ones.

Opposition was never strong it just demonstrated the extent people would go to to not conform. There was no real resistance, just disagreement.

The range and diversity of opposition to the Nazi regime was very vast. The nature of each type of opposition had one common theme, but the extent in which it was carried out was approached in different ways. Opposition ranged from people just wanting not conform to wanting the death of Hitler; this demonstrates the complexities faced by the Nazis when trying to control this. The German people never were transformed into a coherent totality following without question the Fuhrer's every command.