

Grade 9 Answer

Interpretation Evaluation

16
Marks

Question:

How far do you agree with Interpretation 2 about the experiences of young people living in Nazi Germany?

Explain your answer, using both interpretations, and your knowledge of the historical context. (16 marks)

Answer:

Interpretation 1 emphasises the appeal and influence of the Hitler Youth on German boys, as seen in the experience of Bert Trautmann, who felt a strong pride in joining the group. His mother's concerns were outweighed by Bert's eagerness, influenced by Nazi propaganda that promoted the Hitler Youth as a path to national loyalty and camaraderie. Boys in the Hitler Youth were encouraged to pledge absolute loyalty to Hitler, as shown in Trautmann's oath, where he vowed to "devote all my powers and my strength to the saviour of our Reich." This aligns with the Nazi focus on militaristic and ideological training, which prepared boys to serve in the military and fostered loyalty to the Führer above all else. Members often engaged in outdoor activities like camping and physical drills, which mirrored army life, instilling discipline and a sense of purpose. Many young boys, lacking other influences, saw the Hitler Youth as a source of pride and belonging, making it a highly effective tool for Nazi indoctrination. However, I do not fully agree with the interpretation as not all young people had this experience.

Interpretation 2 focuses on the contrasting experiences of girls in Nazi Germany, specifically within the Bund Deutscher Mädel (BDM), or League of German Girls. Unlike boys, whose training was more military-focused, girls were encouraged to prioritize physical health and domestic skills to prepare for motherhood, which the Nazis viewed as their primary role. Girls participated in physical exercises, formation dancing, and gymnastics, which were intended to ensure that they were fit for childbearing. The BDM curriculum emphasized subjects such as cooking, sewing, and baby care, reflecting the Nazi belief that women's "nature" was unsuited to intellectual pursuits and more aligned with homemaking and raising children. The intense focus on physical fitness and domestic training shows how the Nazi regime sought to control every aspect of girls' lives, grooming them to fulfill their roles as future mothers of Aryan children and reinforcing the Nazi ideal of women as the "bearers of the nation."

In conclusion, while both interpretations accurately depict the Nazi regime's control over youth, I agree more with Interpretation 2. It better illustrates how the Nazis shaped young people's lives through gender-specific roles, controlling them through rigid expectations for boys and girls. By contrasting militaristic training for boys with domestic preparation for girls, Interpretation 2 highlights how the Nazi state structured every aspect of youth life to serve its goals, ensuring total control over the next generation's values, roles, and beliefs.

Feedback:

This answer would get 16/16 marks because the pupil has analysed each interpretation in depth using contextual knowledge. The pupil has also given an overall judgement, with sustained reasoning and their answer is logically structured.



Source B

Source B: A poster by Ludwig Hohlwein who was a strong supporter of Hitler. The text reads 'The German Student Fights for the Führer and the People' (c. 1935)



[<https://spartacus-educational.com/GERyouth.htm>]

Source C

Source C: From Isle McKee's autobiography 'Tomorrow the World', published in 1960. McKee was a member of the German League of Girls.

We were told from a very early age to prepare for motherhood, as the mother in the eyes of our beloved leader and the National Socialist Government was the most important person in the nation. We were Germany's hope in the future, and it was our duty to breed and rear the new generation of sons and daughter. These lessons soon bore fruit in the shape of quite a few illegitimate small sons and daughters for the Reich, brought forth by teenage members of the League of German Maidens. The girls felt they had done their duty and seemed remarkably unconcerned about the scandal.

Interpretation 1

Interpretation 1: Catrine Clay 'Trautmann's Journey: From Hitler Youth to FA Cup Legend' published in 2010.

Bert Trautmann couldn't wait to join the Hitler Youth. His mother, better educated than his father, had her misgivings...But begged by Bert and bombarded with Nazi propaganda, his parents scraped together the money it took to buy the uniform... Bert wore it with intense pride as he stood erect giving the Nazi salute before the swastika banner, hair shorn short back and sides, and spoke the oath: "In the presence of the blood banner, I swear to devote all my powers and my strength to the saviour of our Reich, Adolf Hitler. I am willing and ready to give up my life for him, so help me God.

Interpretation 2

Interpretation 2: Cate Haste 'Nazi Women', published in 2001

It was German girls' duty to be healthy, for their bodies belonged to the nation. They must be fit in every way for their ultimate destiny: childbearing. Sport, along with physical training and exercise, was essential. Massive displays of formation dancing and group gymnastics were a regular feature of BDM life. Sport and domestic skills took precedence over intellectual pursuits, which the male leaders considered were against their 'nature'. All girls were trained in household subjects – the theory of nutrition and baby care and the practice of sewing, handicrafts, cooking, healthy eating, and the importance of fresh air and exercise and cleanliness.