‘Nazi social policies towards young people, women, workers and Churches were fully successful in winning the hearts and minds of the German people.’

The Nazi’s social policies were based on the concept of a ‘people’s community’ which was significant as the Nazis aimed to unify the nation by blood, race and ideology which would be significant as it would eliminate any opposition. they social policy aimed to create fit and healthy ‘national comrades’ who were loyal to Hitler and ready to make personal sacrifices. Overall the Nazis social policies aimed to create a new German man and new German women by targeting young people, women, workers and churches.

The Nazis social policies targeted young people by indoctrinating them through two key ways, the education system and through Nazi youth organisations. The Nazis controlled schools by removing teachers who were deemed to be politically unreliable or Jewish as this had a crucial impact on the indoctrination of young people. The Nazis also placed a strong emphasis on PE and military drills in schools. This was significant as it reflects the Nazis obsession with racial ‘health’ and war, portraying how they are training young boys to be a part of the military from a very young age in order to fully indoctrinate them. The focus on girls health was also stressed upon to ensure they would be fit mothers giving birth to the future members of the army, this was targeted by the Nazis social policy as the League for German Girls prepared them for their role as housewives and membership became compulsory in 1936, this illustrates that the Nazis forcefully imposed their social policies and that the people had no other alternative but to follow and conform. The Nazis believed the women’s place was limited to the home therefore women were limited to 10% of available university places. Furthermore, university students were expected to join the German students league and do four months labour service.

The Nazi social policies targeted women as the Nazis wanted to raise the birth rate and to discourage married women from working. The Nazis persuaded women by offering marriage loans to women who left work and married an Aryan man. This was crucial as it maintained the Aryan race. Furthermore, birth control was discouraged, and abortion was restricted to ensure women gave birth and increased the population. The Nazi social policies focussed on women as being mothers since they were encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle and the Reich Mothers service was introduced to train ‘physically and mentally able mothers. Overall the Nazis policies towards women aimed to raise the birth rate, this was somewhat successful although this may have been due to other factors such as the improved economic situation and stability. However, it can be argued that the Nazis were not successful in transmitting their ideology as contrary to the Nazi ideology, the number of women in employment increased, especially after 1936 when labour shortages created pressure to employ them.

The Nazis aimed to eliminate class differences or conflicts via their social policies. The trade unions were seen as an obstacle to this ideal and were therefore banned in May 1933 and replaced by the German Labour Front. The DAF was the largest organisation in Nazi Germany despite membership not being compulsory. Its main role was to spread propaganda between the workers. The strength through joy branch of the DAF helped to raise morale and keep individuals motivated as it offered leisure activities and subsidised holidays for workers which was crucial as it made it one of the regimes most popular organisations. Although there was popularity towards the Nazis policies, strikes still occurred despite the ban of trade unions due to pressure to hold down wages and for people to work harder.

The Nazis aimed to tackle churches as faith was an obstacle to the Nazi aim of making the Fuhror the sole focus of loyalty. The Nazis had their own pressure group, the German Christians, operating within the German Church. This was significant as in 1933, the Nazis coordinated the protestant church into a centralised Reich Church under their control. A Nazi was appointed Bishop which was significant as the Nazis now had control over the protestant church. The Roman Catholics however, were more difficult to control due to their loyalty to the Pope. In order to avoid conflict, they signed a Concordat with the Nazi regime in 1933 where each side agreed not to interfere in each other’s affairs. Although the Nazis did not honour the agreement, after the pope made his famous speech, ‘with burning grief’, the Nazis retaliated by closing church schools and banning youth groups. Monasteries were closed and assets were seized. This was significant as it illustrated the threat of the Church. Overall the regime towards the churches was unsuccessful as it was inconsistent and confused.

It could be argued that by 1939 however, only 5% of the original 95% German Christian population claimed to be god believers which could suggest Nazi policies having been successful in obtaining the hearts and minds of the German people. However, with the use of pressure and terror like they did with the Confessional and Catholic Churches, for example by placing Gestapo and SS agents within their governing bodies, suggests that the Nazis were not successful in fully penetrating the hearts and minds of German people. Although there was support for Nazi social policies in many areas of German society, not everyone was completely won over which therefore explains the Nazis use of terror