

The White Rose



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The White Rose

The Student Resistance
against Hitler
Munich 1942/43

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The Name Weiße Rose (White Rose)

"To get back to my pamphlet 'Die Weiße Rose', I would like to answer the question 'Why did I give the leaflet this title and no other?' by explaining the following: The name 'Die Weiße Rose' was chosen arbitrarily. I proceeded from the assumption that powerful propaganda has to contain certain phrases which do not necessarily mean anything, which sound good, but which still stand for a programme. I may have chosen the name intuitively since at that time I was directly under the influence of the Spanish romances 'Rosa Blanca' by Brentano. There is no connection with the 'White Rose' in English history." Hans Scholl, interrogation protocol of the Gestapo, 20.2.1943

The Origin of the White Rose

The White Rose originated from individual friendships growing into circles of friends.

Christoph Probst and Alexander Schmorell had been friends since their school days. They met Willi Graf and Hans Scholl during their medical studies in 1941/42 at the University of Munich. In May 1942 Sophie Scholl also started studying there. Along with other students critical of the regime, they listened to the lectures of Professor Kurt Huber. However, it was only the circle of friends who, together with Kurt Huber, composed and distributed the leaflets against Hitler.

They started going their own ways very early. What their parents practised or said was not enough for them. They came into conflict with the Hitler Youth or even refused to join. Instead Hans Scholl and Willi Graf belonged to prohibited youth clubs, for the membership of which they were taken briefly into Gestapo custody with very little warning in 1938.

Books, some of which were banned, gave them direction. They sought to make contact with contemporary authors who could not get published anymore or only underground.

They were members of Students' (military) Companies and were allowed to study throughout the semester. During this time the circle of friends grew closer and confirmed their liberal beliefs by taking part in manifold cultural activities. Above all they would read and talk through the night in Eickemeyer's atelier. However, not all their time was spent dealing with weighty and important matters. Survivors still fondly remember the intense experiences they shared.

Activities of the White Rose

After their experiences at the front and reports from friends of mass murders in Poland and Russia, reading and discussing were no longer sufficient for them. In June 1942 Alexander Schmorell and Hans Scholl took action. They wrote, duplicated and sent out the first four "Pamphlets of the White Rose".

In late July 1942, during their semester break, the group served on the eastern front. Later that fall they returned from Russia and reassumed their resistance activities. It was then that their fifth leaflet "Appeal to all Germans!" appeared.

In late January 1943 the battle for Stalingrad ended in disaster. On the German side alone some 230,000 soldiers had lost their lives, about 1,000,000 Russians had died.

After Stalingrad resistance in occupied European countries grew stronger. The German population was shaken after its first major defeat. For the members of the White Rose this was an incentive to bring out their final pamphlet: "Fellow students!"

In Hamburg, Saarbrücken, Ulm, Freiburg, Stuttgart, Berlin, friends worked in small groups, distributing leaflets and maintaining contact.

"Down with Hitler!" and "Freedom!" could be read on the walls of the University and other buildings in Munich on February 3, 8 and 15 in 1943. Alexander Schmorell, Hans Scholl and Willi Graf had written those slogans during the night with coal tar.

The inmates of the Dachau concentration camp heard these "voices of freedom", as they would report after the war, and could hardly believe that they came from young Germans.

Political Opposition in Germany 1933–1945

The National Socialists (Nazis) and their accomplices

- murdered more than 130,000 Germans;
- incarcerated some hundreds of thousands in concentration camps, high-security prisons and jails;
- had more than a million people interrogated and tortured by the Gestapo.

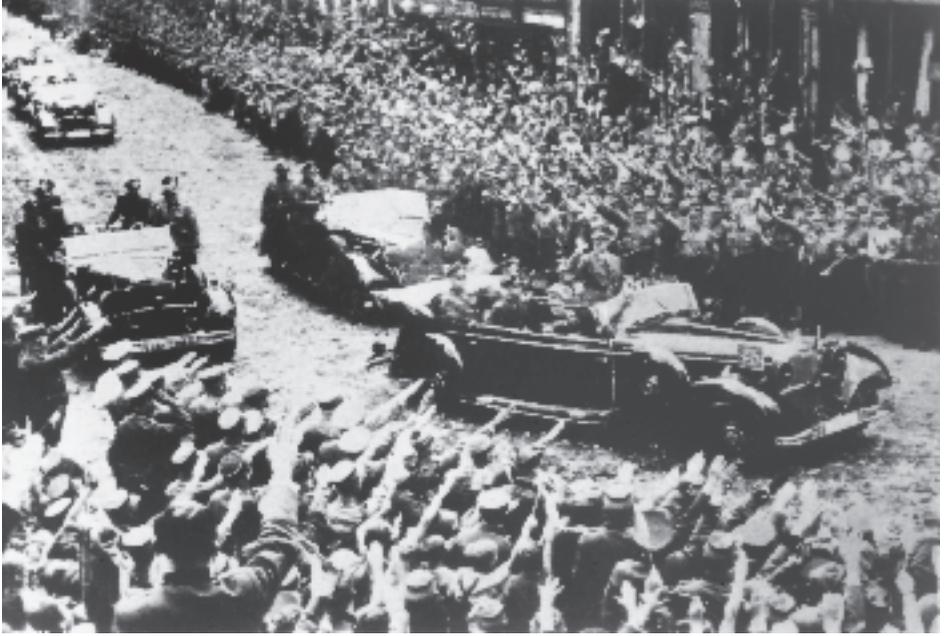
In 1933 Germany's population counted 66 million inhabitants.

"The political history of all nations has hardly ever produced anything greater and nobler than the opposition which existed in Germany. These people fought without any help, whether from within or from without – driven only by the uneasiness of their consciences. As long as they were alive they were invisible to us because they had to put on masks. But their deaths brought their resistance to light. These dead cannot compensate for everything that happened in Germany, but their deeds and their sacrifices are the indestructible foundation of the reconstruction."

Winston Churchill 1946



Germany rearms.
Parade on the
"Day of the Wehrmacht"
Nuremberg, 1936



Hitler entering Berlin
after the capitulation
of France, June 1940



In 1933, Hitler still
pretended to be
bourgeois, walking
along a guard of
honor in Berlin.



From 1938 onwards, Austrian
prisoners were among the
KZ inmates in Dachau.

The Third Reich

On March 21, 1933, the "Day of Potsdam", only seven weeks after "seizing" power, Adolf Hitler proclaimed the Third Reich – without the consent of the people or any free parliament. At the tomb of Friedrich the Great, in the presence of Reichspräsident Hindenburg, the generals and national-conservative elites, Hitler appeared in the role of the "executor of German history."

While millions of Germans – not only National Socialists – were deeply moved, Hitler had his sights on the legitimization of total power. With the reorganization of the Reich, all "Länder" and democratically elected state parliaments were liquidated. Arbitrarily imposed Nazi districts (Gau) took their places; the heads of the Nazi districts (Gauleiter) were appointed by Hitler and were accountable only to him. Thus the citizens were legally incapacitated.

The new model for the nation was the "Volksgemeinschaft" (community of people), pushed through with consent or by force:

- with voluntary membership of NS organizations and divestiture of parties and unions;

- with the help of the "NS-Volkswohlfahrt" (Nazi welfare) and the violent elimination of political opponents;

- with ruthless job creation for Germans and the exclusion of Jews from their professions;

- with the Hitler Youth and concentration camps;

- with the Olympic Games and political murders.

As early as February 3, 1933 Hitler indicated his imperialistic claim to power in a secret speech in front of the commanders of the Reichswehr:

The maximum number of troops stipulated in the Treaty of Versailles, 100,000 men, was breached. The country was to rearm for the "Conquest of living space in the East".

In public speeches Hitler talked about peace, understanding and equality. However, he forced Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations in October 1933.

The myth of the "Rassenfeind" (enemy of the race) was directed against all "Non-Aryans", especially Jews. The disenfranchisement of Jewish German citizens started immediately after Hitler taking power.



October 1938:
"The 'Sudetenland' returns home to the Reich."

Arrested Jews in a courtyard of the Warsaw Ghetto



In the pillory for "Rassenschande" ("racial disgrace", i.e. sexual – or even social – intercourse with "Non-Aryans")

The Nazis had already spoken of the "Extermination of the Jewish race" in their election speeches during the Weimar Republic. Step by step, until the very last days of the war, they carried out their threats: Pogrom of the "Reichskristallnacht", ghettoization, deportation to concentration camps, annihilation through hard labour for the SS and German industry, murder in the extermination camps.

The Third Reich ended with the capitulation of the German Wehrmacht on May 8, 1945 after Hitler's suicide on April 30, 1945.

Youth Movement

The "Bündische Jugend" (free German Youth Movement) was a revolt against the family values and morality of the bourgeoisie and the older generation. Young people wanted to grow up freely and go their own ways. Thus the Youth Movement became a school of nonconformity. The dj.1.11 ("Deutsche Jungenschaft") took on a significant role in the late Twenties. They developed a cult of the adolescent, which fascinated other associations and autonomous youth organizations.

The "Bündische Jugend" obviously had great influence on the members of the White Rose. Hans Scholl had connections to the dj.1.11, Willi Graf had links to the "Grauer Orden" (Grey Order) and Christoph Probst was shaped by a "Freie Schule" (Free School). However, eventually every single one of them left this youth movement behind and became accustomed to the adult culture. Here as well they studied in the fields of literature, art and philosophy, in hopes of finding an answer to the problem of freedom and self-determination, human development and realization of one's own personality.

Youth Opposition in the Third Reich

At the very beginning of the National Socialist era, members of the "Sozialistische Arbeiterjugend" (Association of Young Socialist Workers) went underground. They used amateur-theatre organizations and e.g. the gymnastics club "Fichte" as a cover in order to plan activities against the National Socialists.

Right from the start Communist Youth associations were fundamentally opposed to the National Socialists' education of the youth, consequently they were banned as early as



Eberhard Köbel (1907 – 1955), called "tusk", influential leader of the dj. 1.11



"Jungvolk" (junior section of the Hitler Youth) marches past HJ leaders.



dj. 1.11 at Lake Traunsee in Austria, Easter 1931



dj. 1.11 on a trip with their "Kohte" tent



BDM (Girls' Hitler Youth): "Faith and Beauty"



Pre-military training of Hitler Youth boys

1933. Above all they objected to compulsory military and National Labour Service:

"Young people want peace! Down with the warmongers! Millions of dead on the corpse-fields of a new world war, death as profit for a gang of racketeers and cannon-kings! – That is the future Hitler has promised the young generation (...)"

According to the "Reichskonkordat", the 1933 treaty between the Church and the National Socialist government, Catholic youth associations were still permitted to have uniforms, insignia and banners. Despite this agreement they were oppressed and prohibited in 1938 after the National Socialists had "seized" power.

On December 18, 1933 the Protestant Youth were integrated into the NS State Youth Organization. Many young pastors joined the NSDAP. However, when it turned out that the cross was to be exchanged for the "Hakenkreuz" (Swastika), the "Young Reformation Movement" was founded as part of the Confessional Church. Here Christians who resisted National Socialism united.

Young Jewish people were excluded by law from joining the Hitler Youth and all other sports clubs. They were only permitted to be members of Jewish organizations. These maintained the ideals of the German Youth movement whilst the rest of the country conformed. Under the pressure of persecution, new kinds of self-help arose: preparations were made for emigration to Palestine.

In the fall of 1937 there was a wave of arrests throughout Germany. It destroyed what was left of a significant youth movement that dated back to the beginning of the century. It also affected Hans Scholl and Willi Graf, who were imprisoned by the Gestapo while still young.

During the final years of World War II youth groups who evaded both the Hitler Youth and the war emerged in the bombed big cities of Western Germany. The Gestapo and Police combated them. The "Edelweißpiraten" youth group, who were treated like criminals by the Gestapo, are an example of this.

Hitler Youth

On June 17, 1933 Baldur von Schirach, Youth Leader of the NSDAP (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei – National Socialist German Workers' Party), was appointed Youth Leader of the German Reich.

Excerpts from the Hitler Youth Law of December 1, 1936:

"The Future of the German nation depends on its youth. The entire German youth must therefore be prepared for its future duties.

Thus the "Reichsregierung" (government of the "Reich") has decided to promulgate the following law:

§ 1 The entire German youth is to be consolidated within the Hitler Youth.

§ 2 Apart from at home and at school, the entire German youth is to be educated within the Hitler Youth in order to serve the nation and Volksgemeinschaft (community of the people) physically, intellectually and morally in accordance with the spirit of National Socialism."

In 1938 8.7 million boys and girls were members of the Hitler Youth.

A City in the Third Reich

On January 30, 1933 the National Socialists celebrated their taking power with a torchlight parade. The disputes and street battles were over. Long before the other parties were actually banned they had disappeared from the scene. Opponents of National Socialism were transported to a camp by the armed SA-Hilfspolizei (Storm Troopers' auxiliary police) through the entire city, visible to everyone. Nobody protested.

More and more citizens showed their true colours: Black-Red-and-Gold, the colours of the Republic, were no longer to be seen anywhere, just like the black-white-and-red flag of the Imperial Reich gave way to the Swastika. The streets and squares of the medieval city were used for parades, roll calls and oath-taking ceremonies. Speeches of the Führer were transmitted in public and on the radio on the numerous National Socialist holidays. The citizens were kept on the go, either as marching columns or as rows of people saluting from the sidewalks.

The voluntary and involuntary registration of the city's citizens began. Boys and girls became members of the Hitler Youth; membership was considered by many as liberation from their restrictive homes. Only a few refused to join and as a consequence accepted personal disadvantages. Joining the party was voluntary. In 1933 the party offices had to work overtime in order to accept all applicants. The local newspaper was united with the NS organ.

The party also affected personal life: Nazi wedding services took place in the hall of a monastery which was now used for party purposes; couples received Hitler's book "Mein Kampf" (My fight/struggle). During the ceremony German chamber music was played.

The pianist Elly Ney played Beethoven in the city concert hall and read out letters of soldiers from the front between sonatas.

A few courageous persons, primarily Socialists and Christians, had small resistance groups form around them.

Saying "Guten Tag" or "Grüß Gott" instead of "Heil Hitler" took a great deal of courage. Nonconformists remained silent or only talked to friends, always facing the risk of being prosecuted for "Heimtücke" (ordinary treachery) in the case of any dissenting statements made in public. There was no place in the people's

The local SS marching in celebration of the Führer's 50th birthday, 1939



Sports group of women factory workers

Parade of local army units on a national holiday before 1933

School classes from the city helping with the potato harvest during the war.



Children drafted into the "Volkssturm" (German Territorial Army) units in 1945.





Pleasure from the
Hitler Salute



Bombed city,
1944

community for "grippers" and "belly-achers".

With the introduction of universal conscription in 1935, there was no longer enough space in the barracks. New facilities had to be built. Trade and development were flourishing. Military parades and NSDAP demonstrations were increasingly happening as joint events.

In 1938 the synagogue was set on fire. Old-established Jewish citizens were arrested, abused, the bases of their livelihoods were destroyed, and some of them were murdered. Starting in 1941, they were obliged to wear the Yellow Star of David. In 1943 the last transport of Jews left for Auschwitz and Theresienstadt. Only very few survived, marked for the rest of their lives.

During the first two years of war, special broadcasts announced the German victories. Many believed in victory. The Hitler Youth were given either pre-military or air-defence training. Prisoners of war were forced to work in agriculture or in the armaments industry. Contact with German women would land them in the hands of the Gestapo, and the women were publicly humiliated by having their heads shaved.

On February 18, 1943 Goebbels announced "Total War" at the Berlin Sportpalast; it was the day of the Scholl siblings' imprisonment. Young and old people, even women were forcibly employed in armaments factories in order to replace the workers who had been drafted and sent to the front. After the attempted assassination of Hitler on July 20, 1944, the party organized itself for the battle for the "Endsieg" (final victory).

The destruction of the city in bombing raids barely affected people's morale. The "Volkssturm" (consisting of boys and men unsuitable for military service) was the last line of defense against the enemy.

The Allies, on entering the city, could not find a single person willing to admit to having been a National Socialist.

Munich – Capital of the Movement

On August 2, 1935 Hitler conferred the title "Capital of the Movement" on the city of Munich.

In 1920 the NSDAP had been founded there.

During the night from the 8th to the 9th of November 1923, Hitler proclaimed a national revolution by firing a shot into the ceiling of the "Bürgerbräukeller" (the "Beer Hall Putsch"). The following day's march towards the "Feldherrenhalle" was an attempt at seizing power in Bavaria. Hitler imitated Mussolini's march on Rome. The Bavarian State Police shot into the crowd. Hitler fled, 15 of his followers and three policemen died.

The trial was a farce – the judge sought above all reasons for exonerating the defendant – and Hitler was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in a fortress, of which he spent only nine comfortable months in Landsberg. It was there that he dictated his book "Mein Kampf" to Rudolf Hess.

After the National Socialist takeover, the failed march on the "Feldherrenhalle" was elevated to an annual march of triumph on November 9, 1933. It was led by the "Blutorden-träger" (Bearers of the Blood Order) marching with the "Blutfahne" (Blood Flag).

On June 30, 1934 during the course of the so-called "Röhm Putsch" or "Night of the Long Knives", Hitler had hundreds of "Alte Kämpfer" (old fighters) shot, especially the leadership of the SA ("Sturmabteilung", Storm Troopers or "Brownshirts") as well as many more alleged adversaries. These murders, along with others, were never atoned for. The commemorating march on November 9 was cancelled that year.

On November 9, 1935 the coffins of the 16 "Blutzeugen" (martyrs called "blood witnesses") of the "Reichswehr" movement were brought through a forest of flags, past burning pylons, to the temples of honor at Königsplatz. There they were laid out in state for the eternal death watch. The Capital of the Movement now had its place of worship.

During the years 1934/35 Königsplatz was paved with granite slabs. The elegant, classicist square of Ludwig I. was turned into a regularly shaped marching ground, a forum for national rallies and celebrations. It was renamed "Königlicher Platz" (Royal Square). The people of Munich called it "Plattensee" (the German word for slab is Platte).

On its eastern side the party buildings were erected; they still exist today. The "Braunes Haus" (brown house), official headquarters of the party and its Führer, was situated nearby. These constructions were supposed to become the centre of a future imperial capital of the movement.



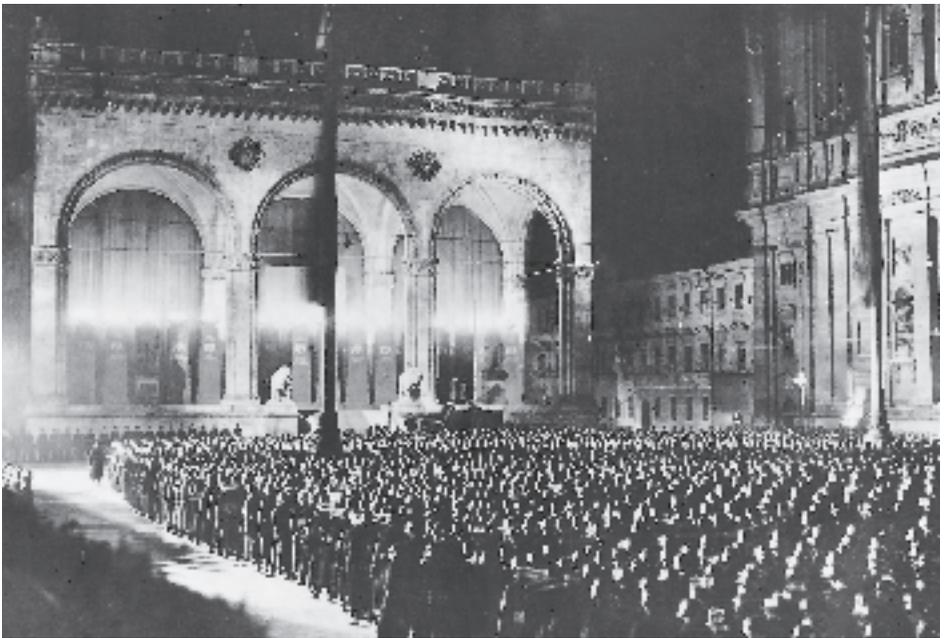
Memorial March of the "Old Fighters" to the Feldherrenhalle on November 9



Adolf Hitler with leading party comrades in the Hofbräuhaus in the 1920s



General Ludendorff and Adolf Hitler before their trial for high treason, in 1924



Nightly parade of soldiers on Odeonsplatz in front of the Feldherrenhalle



"Königlicher Platz" (Royal Square): mass march past of the NSDAP (Nazi Party)



Adolf Hitler as
"Flag Bearer of the Nation":
Great German Art Exhibition
in 1937



Float in front of the
'House of German Art',
1938

Procession "2000 years of
German Culture",
Munich in 1938

Munich – Capital of German Art

In 1933 the foundation stone of the "House of German Art" was laid. Above the entrance Hitler's words could be read: "Art is a noble mission which demands fanaticism". With this building Hitler intended to turn Munich into a city of art once again, as it had been in the time of Ludwig I.

Here "German Art" was exhibited regularly during the years 1937–1944. It "is supposed to and will be eternal like all creative values of a nation." According to Adolf Hitler, only historical architectural styles, especially classicism and renaissance, were noble and eternal. Modern art was a "confusing swindle".

In 1937 the "House of German Art", built by Professor Troost, was inaugurated. Munich became the backdrop: flags and decorations covered and transformed the city. On the "Day of German Art" a long procession of horse-drawn wagons celebrating "2000 years of German Culture" moved through Munich. In contrast to the "clear and true" nature of German art stood "degenerate" modern art. It was exhibited in the Hofgarten Arcades in narrow and confusing arrangements; hateful slogans provided the commentary.

The cleansing of the temple of art, requested by the "Nationalist Society for German Culture" as early as 1927, was completed and was met with broad approval among the population.

Excerpt from Hitler's speech against modern art at the opening of the "Great German Art Exhibition" in 1937:

"From now on we will fight a merciless war of purification against the remaining elements of our cultural subversion. Should there be anyone among them who still feels destined to be superior, well, he has had four years to prove this. These four years have given us enough time to arrive at a final judgement. From now on, let me assure you, all those cliques of chatterers, dilettantes and art frauds, supporting each other and therefore still in existence, will be dug out and eliminated. Those underdeveloped, prehistoric and stuttering art people from the cultural stone age should just return to their caves and scribble on the walls in their primitive international way."

University of Munich

After the First World War extreme right-wing populist, anti-Semitic views started to prevail at the University. Count Arco-Valley shot Kurt Eisner, first political leader of the "Free State of Bavaria", on February 21, 1919. Count Arco had many like-minded friends at the University.

Led by Rudolf Hess and Wilhelm Brückner – future Nazi big shots – armed students participated in the Hitler Putsch.

Right-wing populist views dominated. Rector Karl Vossler got into a dispute with student corporations and colleagues when he dared, for the first time, to hoist a black-red-and-gold flag, the colours of the Republic. Only Black-White-and-Red, the colours of the Imperial Reich, was accepted.

Populist views were anti-Semitic ones:

As early as 1920 Albert Einstein was not permitted to lecture at university. The chemist and Nobel Prize winner Richard Willstätter resigned in 1925 in protest at the "compulsive, intolerant and unconstitutional anti-Semitism". There were also anti-Semitic members on the faculty-appointing committees.

In 1926 the National Socialist German Students' Association (NSDStB) was founded and gained immediate success in university elections: already a third of the vote in 1930, then the majority of the German students' vote in 1931. These NS successes grew on the fertile ground of the "healthy national attitude" considered desirable even by liberal professors.

After the National Socialists came to power in 1933, all other student associations were banned. Brown uniforms dominated the scene at the University. On May 10, 1933 the student body distributed invitations and tickets along with programs for the "Book-Burning Action at Königsplatz".

The "Law for Restoration of the Permanent Civil Service" of April 7, 1933 removed a lot of Jewish professors and almost all Jewish research and teaching assistants from the University. Many of them emigrated, some committed suicide. The blood-letting of Germany's academia began.

In 1934 the university lost its autonomy. The Reich Ministry took control and appointed rectors and deans according to the "Führer principle".

Starting September 1, 1939, many students joined the army. Uniforms of the Wehrmacht now prevailed in the lecture halls. In January of 1943 protests from student soldiers arose when in the Deutsche Museum Gauleiter Geisler requested female students to bear children for the Führer rather than continue their studies.

This public protest by students encouraged the circle of friends: they wrote "Down with Hitler!" and "Freedom!" on the walls of the University. On February 18 Hans and Sophie Scholl distributed leaflets there.

Orientations

In searching for what was right for them to do, the friends turned to books and conversations with people who had kept their courage and had maintained clear and upright views.

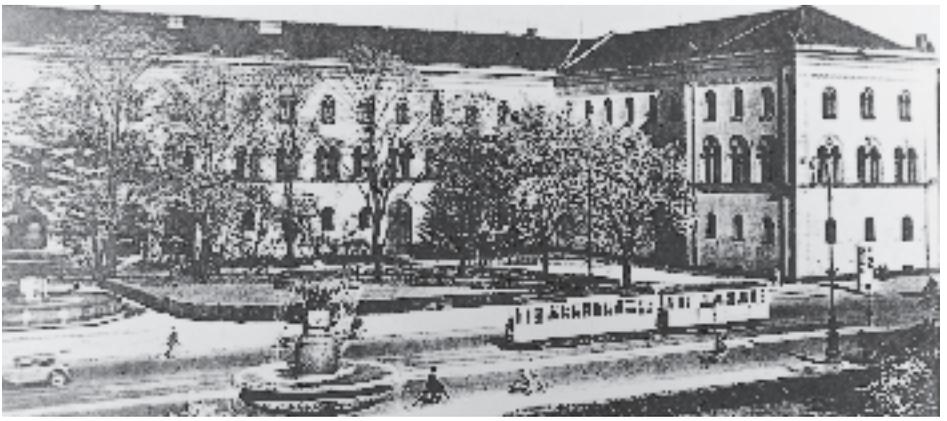
Their works could not be bought in regular stores. They were to be found in second-hand ones, to be got from friends or, sometimes, from under the counter of a sympathetic bookseller. Their friendship with Professor Carl Muth would later give them access to a large library. During the war important works could be found especially in France, where no book-burning actions had taken place. Particularly in 1942 the friends came together for reading evenings; long discussions would follow. Books inspired almost all of their conversations.

Willi Graf and his friends in Saarbrücken read Romano Guardini (1885–1968). The official Catholic Church considered him suspicious. German was to become the language of liturgy, understandable for all Christians. Guardini's interpretations of Hölderlin, Rilke and other poets reached beyond the restrictive views of the church and made a new descriptive spiritual world accessible for young Christians.

Beginning of the semester in the lecture hall, 1938



Anatomy lecture with soldiers of the students' company



University of Munich,
main building, 1935

Book Burning,
May 10, 1933,
10.30 pm



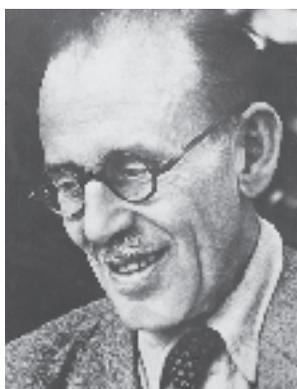
SA Students



Walter Wüst,
"SS-Oberführer",
Rector of Munich University
1941–1945, Prof. for Aryan
cultural studies and philology



Josef Furtmeier



Harald Dohm



Werner Bergengruen

Paul Claudel (1868–1955), in his play *The Satin Slipper*, turned history into a universal one for all nations, regardless of their skin colour and nationality. In their diversity they are all of equal value.

Georg Bernanos (1888–1948), Jacques Maritain (1882–1973), Léon Bloy (1846–1917) and Francis Jammes (1868–1938) all belonged to the 'Renouveau Catholique' and aimed for a renewal of the faith beginning with the origins of tradition.

Léon Bloy considered poverty an indispensable circumstance for this renewal, which explains his aggression towards the French church becoming bourgeois.

It was not only past and present that these writers were concerned with. In his book *The future of Christianity* Jacques Maritain drew a picture of a free, democratic society which seriously separates state and church.

In his *The Grand Inquisitor*, Dostojevski (1821–1881) describes the opposite position: mankind cannot make proper use of the freedom brought by Christ. The Catholic Church does it for him. It accepts his happily following his physical urges as long as he accepts its God-given authority.

In the *Confessions* by Augustinus (354–430) the friends found dialogue with a personal God. Reading Thomas von Aquin (1225–1274) they learned that thinking had to be driven to its limits before faith could begin. Through Professor Carl Muth, Hans Scholl encountered the Munich sociologist Alfred von Martin (1882–1979).

In his book *Nietzsche and Burckhardt* he developed the implicit concept of a federal and pluralistic Europe. These thoughts can be found in the fifth pamphlet of the *White Rose*.

In the circle around Alfred von Martin, Hans and Sophie Scholl also met Josef Furtmeier (1887–1969), whom the friends called "The Philosopher". Having withdrawn from his position in the NS judicial system he lived on a meagre pension. The friends were deeply impressed by the congruity of his thoughts and actions.

Theodor Haecker (1879–1945) had translated the works of Kierkegaard. To him human existence was defined by the experience of suffering, fear and death rather than by race, power and war. Like Karl Kraus, whom he knew, his thinking was independent of the "zeitgeist" of the bourgeoisie and fascism. His prophecies about the downfall of the powerful came true step by step. They can be found in his "Tag- und Nachtbüchern" (*Day and Night Diaries*), from which he read to the circle of the *White Rose* in 1942.

Professor Carl Muth (1867–1944) published *Hochland* (*Highland*). This monthly magazine contained articles primarily by critical Catholics, including some from abroad. Hans and Sophie Scholl got to know Carl Muth in the fall of 1941 through Otl Aicher. In him they gained a friend who really knew the world. He provided them with access to an unorthodox Catholicism. He was the centre of a circle of National-Socialism opponents.

Through Carl Muth, Hans Scholl met Werner Bergengruen (1892–1964) in the fall of 1941.

Bergengruen's book "Der Großtyrann und das Gericht" (The Grand Tyrant and the Court of Justice) was perceived as an implicit attack on Hitler in circles critical of the regime. Werner Bergengruen, however, did not only write, he also took action.

"I didn't know that Hans Scholl, the student I met at Carl Muth's house, was the author of the leaflets of the White Rose which my wife and me copied on typewriter at night and which I brought on bicycle in the city, after having chosen the addresses carefully, in order to distribute them among mailboxes in different districts."

Werner Bergengruen, special edition of Hochland, 46th volume, October 1953

"Encouraged by advice from Haecker, we had started reading Kierkegaard and slowly understood what had recently come to be intended by the term "existence". In a dictatorship the question of truth, the actual question of philosophy, is indeed pushed into the background. It is no longer about recognition as a matter of recognizing, but about what is the right thing now, about what is the right thing for me."

Otl Aicher, "Inside Views of War"

"In the evenings we read a book by Bernanos together. If only you could get some of his works where you are! He is no longer published in Germany, since he is a living Frenchman. The title is Diary of a Country Pastor. If only you could somehow get it in order to read it. I really want to possess it one day."

Sophie Scholl, January 13, 1941

"In the evening we usually get together, read Claudel's *Satin Slipper*, and talk until late at night. Again I realize how much I'm not used to such things anymore; it will take me a long time to get accustomed to them again."

Willi Graf, diary, July 16, 1942

"Since you know Bloy's book *The Blood of the Poor* perfectly well, here are some words on the mystery of poverty, which has been on my mind more than anything else for some time now and which has been calling for a solution, until I discovered Bloy through Dostojewski."

Hans Scholl, October 24, 1941

"We picked up the concept of the pluralistic democracy from Jacques Maritain. Atheists will coexist with Christians, Socialists with Liberals, and no utopian ideology of race or class will ever justify power over others."

Otl Aicher, "Inside Views of War"

"Every day there is something new here for me to digest. Yesterday I had tea with Prof. Muth and Sigismund von Radecki. And in the evening Hans and I went to a friend whom we only call the 'philosopher'. There we had a three-hour, continuous and exhausting conversation. – In fact, I need to spend some time alone, since I feel the urge to realize, through action, what has been inside me only as thoughts and recognized as the right thing."

Sophie Scholl, May 30, 1942

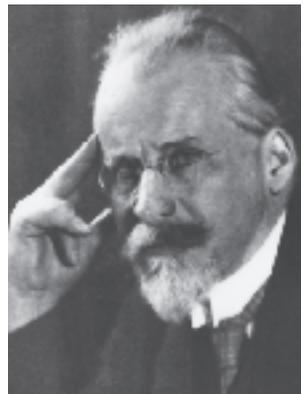
Alfred von Martin



Theodor Haecker



Carl Muth



Willi Graf

Willi Graf was born on January 2, 1918 in Kuchenheim / Kreis Euskirchen. He grew up in a Catholic family, along with his two sisters, in Saarbrücken, where his father took over a wholesale wine-selling business in 1922.

He graduated in 1937 from the humanist Ludwigs-Gymnasium (high school). He was especially interested in German, Religion, History and Geography, and later in Greek and Music.

At the age of eleven Willi became a member of the Catholic Students' association "Neudeutschland". After the National Socialists had dissolved all denominational youth organizations, Willi joined the "Grauer Orden" in 1934. This group consisted of former members of the "Bündische Jugend" from Southwest Germany. The "Grauer Orden" tried to find a new approach to liturgical questions. Within this circle Willi received decisive literary and theological stimuli. Recognition that Christians and human beings were mutually inclusive called upon Christians to think and act politically. Furthermore, it became more and more obvious that it was impossible to reconcile National Socialism and Christianity. Thus Willi Graf was strengthened ever more in his determination to reject the regime. Despite threats and coercion he never joined the Hitler Youth. Due to his participation in illegal field trips, camping expeditions and meetings, he was eventually put under arrest for three weeks in January 1938. Along with 17 other members of the "Grauer Orden" he was accused of "bündische Umtriebe" (subversive activities of the Youth Movement) at the Special Court (Sondergericht) in Mannheim. The trial was cancelled due to an amnesty after Austria's integration ("Anschluss") into the Reich.

After six months of compulsory National Labour Service, Willi Graf started his medical studies in Bonn in the winter semester of 1937/38.

In January 1940 he was drafted into the "Wehrmacht" (German Armed Forces) as a medical orderly. Especially in Yugoslavia, Poland and Russia he experienced the misery of the common people and heard about war atrocities and murderous actions committed against Jews.

From April 1942 he was able to continue his studies in Munich in the Second Students' Company. In mid-June that same year he got to know Alexander Schmorell, the Scholl siblings, Christoph Probst and later Prof. Kurt Huber. In the Bach Choir and at fencing lessons he also met fellow students who shared his opposition views.

In July 1942 he was forced to join the "Feldfamulatur" as an extern at the eastern front. He was to serve three months together with Hans Scholl and Alexander Schmorell, who in June had already written and distributed the first leaflets of the White Rose.

At the beginning of the winter semester 1942/43, Graf, Schmorell and Scholl returned to Munich. It was now that Willi finally decided to join the resistance activities of the White Rose. He helped draft and distribute the fifth and sixth pamphlets and together with Hans Scholl and Alexander Schmorell he painted freedom slogans on public buildings at night. Above all Willi Graf took on the task of expanding the resistance beyond Munich. With leaflets and a duplicating machine in his luggage, he tried to win support among his old circle of friends from the "Bündische Jugend" in Saarbrücken, Cologne, Bonn, Freiburg and Ulm. Only four of them were prepared to participate actively: Heinz and Willi Bollinger, Helmut Bauer and Rudi Alt.

After the apprehension of the Scholl siblings, Willi Graf and his sister Anneliese – who was also studying in Munich – were arrested in their apartment on February 18, 1943.

On April 19, 1943 Roland Freisler, presiding over the "Volksgerichtshof" (People's Court of Justice), sentenced Willi Graf to death in the second trial against the White Rose.



Willi Graf: passport photograph, 1928

Trip to Montenegro with friends from the "Grauer Orden" in 1936 (Willi 3rd from the right)



In Bad Wildbad 1940



Student in Bonn, 1938

After the Gestapo had tried unsuccessfully for months to squeeze the names of accessories out of him, Willi was guillotined on October 12, 1943. In his farewell letter to his sister he told his friends: "You must carry on what we have started."

Willi Graf: excerpts from diary and letters:

June 15, 1941: "what really matters, what makes all deeds meaningful and worthwhile, is the fact that there are still people one can live together with, since they have the same views. The general climate, the standards and the backdrop are not important at all, they don't count for anything at the height where we endeavour to live."

June 6, 1942: "Each individual holds overall responsibility. But it is our duty to confront any doubts and eventually start moving in a clear direction."

December 27, 1942: "In the morning I visited the Bollinger family. We talked about the situation in Freiburg, but pretty soon we understood each other and got along really well."

January 14, 1943: "A lot of time is passing with my working on the plan. Is this the right way? Sometimes I am sure of it, sometimes I doubt it. But despite all this, I will take it upon me, no matter how arduous it may be."

"Our upbringing, the way we grew up in our religion, was extremely bad and full of impossibilities. This entire construction was hollow and full of cracks. Only due to a certain sheen and a good amount of safety did we manage to feel comfortable in it. However, we did not receive the ability to judge or a lively conviction with which to defend our world view if necessary. I believe that what we got to see through the years and what we were advised to imitate was not real Christianity. In reality Christianity is a much more difficult and much more uncertain way of life full of effort and again and again it takes will power to practise it. Faith is by far not as simple a matter as it appeared; not everything goes so smoothly as we believed it would and perhaps wished for, in order to worry as little as possible, since that for many people is highly disagreeable."

Letter to his sister Anneliese,
June 6, 1942

"Don't think that all my thoughts are smooth and free, even if it might seem that way sometimes. There are always doubts and they grow constantly the more I have to deal with them. But I am trying to gain lucidity and recognize my path. Certainty and doubts switch places and there are days when I can't see any solution and all recognition comes up against high walls. You must always remember that it's like this for all people, no matter how sound they may be. It is uncomfortable to give in to such turbulences, undisturbed tranquillity is much nicer. Some do in fact possess the wisdom that brings them peace, but some find it too exhausting to keep struggling with it and are satisfied with small steps in their personal lives. Often one wishes to be considered one of those "satisfied" people, how simple everything would be! But we can't find this path, no matter how insensitive we try to make ourselves. This is our fate: to be shaken by eternal agitation; it is often unbearable, but it can't be changed. – You must never grow tired, and an arbitrary end, in order to cast off all burdens forever, may appear to be a solution but, in fact, is not."

June 25, 1942 to his sister Anneliese

"Willi Graf and I left the lecture of Professor Huber early in order to get to the psychiatric clinic in time. At the glass exit door Hans and Sophie came towards us with a suitcase. We were in a rush, didn't talk much and set a date for the afternoon. In the street-car an uneasy feeling came over me: What were they doing at the University five minutes before the lecture was due to end? Willi shrugged, but he was worried as well."

Traute Lafrenz, 1946

Professor Kurt Huber

Kurt Huber was born on October 24, 1893 in Chur/Switzerland; his parents were German. When he was four his family moved to Stuttgart, where he attended the Eberhard-Ludwig-Gymnasium in 1903. He was strongly encouraged by his parents to develop his musical talents. After his father died his mother moved to Munich with her four children.

Kurt Huber studied musicology, psychology and philosophy and in 1917 obtained his doctorate. Qualified to give lectures in philosophy, he worked as a lecturer for experimental and applied psychology and became an associate professor in 1926.

In 1929 he married Clara Schlicker.

At the request of the German Academy, from 1925 he collected old Bavarian folk songs. On trips to the Balkans, to the South of France and to Spain, he recorded important song material.

In the summer of 1942 Kurt Huber came into contact with the students of the White Rose, who attended his lectures. He also met them along with other members of the resistance at Schmorell's house and in Eickemeyer's atelier, where they informed him about the leaflets.

The defeat at Stalingrad gave him reason to state the following in one of his lectures: "The time of empty phrases is over". He, too, now demanded what the students had already formulated in the third pamphlet: "The prime concern of every German should not be the military victory over Bolshevism, but the defeat of the National Socialists". He composed the last leaflet: "Fellow Students!"

On February 27, 1943 Kurt Huber was arrested. On April 19, 1943 he was one of the main defendants in the second trial of the People's Court against the White Rose and proved to be a courageous opponent of Roland Freisler. The presiding judge attacked Kurt Huber in particular, refusing to recognize any honourable motive and depriving him of his doctorate and professorship titles. Survivors remember Kurt Huber's last words as very moving. They were a declaration of belief in justice, decency and humanity, which encouraged the young defendants and gave them strength.

Until the day of his execution Kurt Huber, in the confines of his cell, worked on his book about the philosopher and mathematician Leibniz.



Kurt Huber, in the 1930s, associate professor for philosophy and psychology since 1926

Concert of Indian music, Kurt Huber to the right of the conductor, 1929

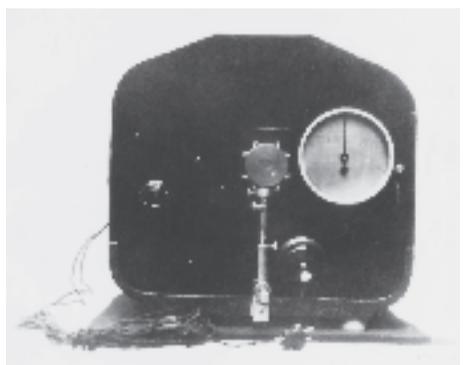


In the Bavarian mountains



Singing competition, Landshut, 1931

Kurt Huber's "universal analysator" to determine frequencies



On July 13, Kurt Huber and Alexander Schmorell were executed in the Munich prison called Stadelheim. Clara Huber and her two children were left destitute. Collections of money for the family led to more arrests and the trial against Hans Leipelt and his friends.

"Sophie attended his lectures, but students from other faculties, too, crowded into the hall; it was often difficult to find a seat. His personality must have had great effect. My brother once described to me how he, restricted through an old illness in his mobility and sometimes even in his speech, formed the words as if they were just being created. What a contrast to the constant rattling of the Führer's speeches, the liquid phrases dripping out of Goebbels's mouth! In Professor Huber's lectures one really paid attention, followed his train of thought and discovered many references to the prevailing situation which made the students listen even closer. Hans Scholl sought and found personal contact to him."
Angelika Probst, 1947

"His research on songs and musical subjects led all the way to the South Sea Islands – and how often he spoke of other nations' and races' works of art with such great enthusiasm! His open and warm-hearted personality, always looking for the related soul even in people from faraway countries, always filled me with great joy when I saw him, especially during the past few years in which the world was full of rejection and hatred of everything that was foreign. How refreshing the hours with him were for me and everyone who was not a resident of this country!

The terrors of the time were increasing. There was no freedom of thought in the nation and no freedom of science at the universities. The danger for people like him was growing constantly. I deeply hoped that he would yet fall silent and wait for this unenlightened current to pass and for the pure river to become visible again. This was probably too much of an oriental approach. Kurt Huber had to go a different way."

Mirok Li, student

"Without a doubt Huber was of similar importance to German folk music as the Grimm Brothers were for the German fairy tale. His work even reached beyond the German folk song to that of other European nations. In addition to simply collecting them he evaluated the psychological-philosophic and musical-aesthetic aspects, which was extraordinarily important from the methodical point of view, as well as the recognition of fundamental tribal characteristics. His real life's work, folk-song typology and the collection of German folk songs would be among the classical intellectual heritage of the German nation."
Excerpt from the plea for clemency by Dr. Kurt Port, head of the Cotta publishing house

"As I watched him working at that small desk in his tiny cell, faced with certain death, wielding his most dangerous weapon, his quill pen, diligently and confidently despite everything, this was a shocking image of Germany's intellectual situation: the spirit was imprisoned and condemned to death!

I still see him walking the short distance from the cell to the place of execution – his demeanour manly and upright as always, a smile on his face caused by the temporary loss of his slippers, and the determined faith in his heart that death is but a passage to life."

Pastor Brinkmann, Catholic chaplain, in a letter to Clara Huber

"The execution of Kurt Huber by the Nazi judiciary on July 13, 1943 robbed Bavaria, and beyond that the whole of Germany, of one of the most capable men of musicology. There are few personalities who unite the scholar, the practitioner and the artist in such a harmonic way as Kurt Huber. His name and his work will remain unforgotten."
Robert Münster, musicologist

Hans Leipelt

Hans Leipelt was born in Vienna on July 18, 1921. His father Conrad Leipelt was a qualified engineer, his mother Katharina, née Baron, was a chemist with a PhD. She came from an Austrian Jewish family of Christian faith who gave her the chance to go to university. This was very unusual for women in those days. Hans and his sister, who was born after their move to Hamburg in 1925, were brought up Protestant and later confirmed. They lived a carefree life until in 1935 the Nuremberg laws branded the siblings as "Jewish Half-Breeds" and their mother as a "Privileged Full Jew".

Hans already passed his "Abitur" (final school exam) in 1938. He joined the labour service of the Reich and later the "Wehrmacht" voluntarily. When the German army marched into Austria, Hans' Jewish grandparents fled to Czechoslovakia. His uncle committed suicide. Their grandfather died after the escape. Conrad Leipelt brought his grandmother to live with the family in Hamburg. She was forced to wear the yellow Star of David on her clothes from 1941 onwards.

At the beginning of the war in 1939 Hans participated in the military action against Poland. At the same time his mother and grandmother were affected by the nightly curfew imposed on Jews. In the campaign against France, Hans Leipelt was decorated with the Iron Cross and the Bronze Order of Merit for armoured divisions. A secret edict of the OKW (Supreme Army Command) on April 8, 1940 had decided that all "Jewish Half-Breeds" had to be discharged from the Wehrmacht. In August 1940 Hans was affected as well. He found this dishonorable and degrading.

In September 1940 he began his chemistry studies in Hamburg. Together with friends he read, considered, heard and discussed what was forbidden by or unwelcome to the regime: books by condemned authors, paintings of "degenerate" artists, music ranging from Stravinski to Swing, BBC news.

Due to a growing persecution of the Jews, Hans Leipelt left university in the summer of 1941. At a New Year's Eve party among friends, he read to them from his "Questionnaire in the Fourth Reich", which would later be detected by the Gestapo. One of the questions was: "Were you ever arrested in the Third Reich? If not, why not?"

Starting from the winter semester of 1941/1942, Hans studied at the University of Munich. Here the Nobel Prize winner Professor Heinrich Wieland, who never raised his arm for the Hitler salute, ignored the racist university regulations. Among the professor's assistants and students were "Jewish Half-Breeds" and opponents of the National Socialists. It was here that Hans Leipelt got to know his future confidante Marie-Luise Jahn.

On July 19, 1942 his grandmother was deported to Theresienstadt, where she was murdered. It was about the same time that his sister Maria was expelled from school as a "Jewish Half-Breed". On September 23 his father died. After the death of their only "Aryan" family member they were left without protection.

In 1943, shortly after the apprehension of Hans and Sophie Scholl, Hans Leipelt received the sixth leaflet of the White Rose by mail. Together with Marie-Luise Jahn he began to duplicate it on his portable typewriter and distribute it; "...and their spirit lives on despite everything!" was the title they gave their text. Leipelt and Jahn took pamphlets to Hamburg. The circle of friends there also saw to their distribution.

After Professor Huber was arrested, Hans Leipelt and Marie-Luise Jahn collected money, which they had sent anonymously to the impoverished Mrs Huber. This collection was denounced. Hans Leipelt was arrested on October 8, 1943, as were Marie-Luise Jahn and seven other friends shortly after. Professor Wieland took care of their legal affairs. In Hamburg, Leipelt's sister Maria and his mother were also taken into custody. On December 9, 1943 Leipelt's mother lost her life in Fuhlsbüttel prison – it has never been clarified how.

On October 13, 1944 Hans Leipelt was sentenced to death by the People's Court in Donauwörth, Marie-Luise Jahn was sent for 12 years to a maximum-security penitentiary. Professor Wieland testified as a witness for the defense and, even in court, refused to give the German salute. His courageous behaviour provided strong moral support for the defendants. The next day at the institute he talked as a matter of course about his presence at the trial and the sentences handed down.

On January 29, 1945 Hans Leipelt was executed at Munich-Stadelheim prison.



Hans Leipelt at the beginning of World War II, 1939



Hans Leipelt and Marie-Luise Jahn in their bombed students' apartment, September 1943



"Hans wanted to be a good German. The bigoted, oppressive arbitrariness of the National Socialist dictatorship, its lawlessness and persecution of his family drove him to join the resistance."

Marie-Luise Jahn, 1994

"The way in which young Leipelt conducted himself at the main trial in the People's Court left a deep personal impression on me. Despite the Gestapo surveillance we succeeded in organizing a private consultation in the corridor of the courthouse. Leipelt implored me to try to help you (Marie-Luise Jahn), under all circumstances, even if this meant incriminating him. When I refused to do so, he pleaded with me until I relented and made me promise with a handshake that his wish would be honored. I had not known Leipelt before and saw him for the first time in my life, but the degree of human greatness and the personal dignity of this young man in that situation has remained forever in my memory."

Excerpt from a letter written by Marie-Luise Jahn's defense lawyer, 1972

"Dearest little sister, (...) at this very moment, so to speak, I have sent you a card (or rather a letter), the first one to be mailed to your address in Cottbus, as I found out only last week – and today is the day of my execution. I know what deep pain this message will cause you, if you get it at all, considering the disruption of communication in the current war situation. It will make you feel all the stronger how completely helpless and abandoned you are now that the last person really close to you will be taken away. Even though presently I am as helpless as you, I would have done anything in my power to help you after the war, with a life full of never-ending love I would have tried to make up for what you have lost and suffered because of me. But still, dearest, you won't be left alone. Apart from the fact that I know some good people who will do anything to find you after the war and take care of you, you remain in the hands of God, in which I leave you without concern – since He holds us in his hands, protects us and keeps us. And even if He seems to withdraw this protection from us, this is exactly what we have to gain our strength from. We need to have confidence in Him, even if we don't understand His ways sometimes and perhaps even find them hard. I beg you, and I will pray for this in my last hours, that you will keep this trust in God for the rest of your life. Try not to be sad for me and don't be concerned. In the true sense of the word, I feel divine peace inside me and I'll die without fear, hoping for God to forgive me. This is bitterly necessary when I think how severely I have sinned against Him, our dear mother, you and Eileen – not to mention all the others close to me. The Protestant chaplain Dr. Alt will administer the Holy Communion. And now finally let me ask you to forgive me my frequent lack of affection, my egoism, especially my lack of self-control by which I have thrust this misfortune upon you. Farewell my dearest. Once again I commit you to the hands of God. I know that we will see each other again. Your loving brother Hans".

Excerpt from Hans Leipelt's farewell letter to his sister Maria, January 29, 1945

Christoph Probst

Christoph Probst was born on November 6, 1919 in Murnau/Staffelsee. His father was a private scholar who researched Sanskrit and Eastern religions. *Joie de vivre*, a quest for knowledge and the urge to discover shaped his personality. From early childhood Christoph Probst had a close relationship with his older sister Angelika. What with their stepmother being Jewish, the siblings experienced National Socialism after the takeover as a concrete threat.

The humanist-liberal education at the boarding schools in Marquartstein and in Schondorf on Lake Ammersee strengthened Christoph Probst in his absolute rejection of the regime. With his teacher Bernhard Knoop he had intense discussions about the prevailing conditions as well as the officially decreed anti-Semitism.

In 1935 he had already got to know Alexander Schmorell at the "Neues-Real-Gymnasium" in Munich. They grew to be inseparable friends. Alex often came to visit the Probst family out in the country. In the city they took fencing lessons together. Christoph started to learn Russian in order to be able to read Russian literature in the original.

During his time in Schondorf literature and philosophy became very important to him. On clear winter nights he studied the star-filled sky.

At his graduation in 1937 his teachers described him as an unusually mature, lively-minded student of critical discernment.

After obligatory labour and military service he began to study medicine at the Ludwig-Maximilian University in the summer semester of 1939.

Christoph Probst and Alexander Schmorell met Hans Scholl during their time in Munich; they, too, soon became friends.

During the war, Christoph's critical perspective on National Socialism sharpened. As a member of the students' company in the air force he was able to continue his medical studies even after the outbreak of hostilities, first in Munich, later in Strasburg and Innsbruck.

At the age of 21, he married Herta Dohrn, daughter of Harald Dohrn, a private scholar with a critical attitude towards the regime. Harald Dohrn was found guilty in the third trial against the White Rose on July 13, 1943 and was shot on April 20, 1945 in Perlacher Forest due to his participation in the "Action to Free Bavaria".

Christoph Probst and Willi Graf met in the summer of 1942 during a concert or visit to a theater. They continued to get together for evening readings and discussions in the atelier of the architect Manfred Eickemeyer.

The friends did their best to keep Christoph, who was by now a father of two children, away from the more dangerous activities. In early December 1942 he was transferred to a students' company in Innsbruck. From there he travelled to Munich several times to participate in activities of the White Rose.

After the arrest of Hans Scholl, the Gestapo found on his person a handwritten draft of a leaflet torn to pieces. It had been written by Christoph Probst. The text focused on the tragic events of Stalingrad. He would pay for this appeal with his life.

Christoph Probst was arrested on February 19, 1943 when he was about to pick up a leave permit to visit his ailing wife after the birth of their third child.

On February 22, 1943 Roland Freisler, presiding over the People's Court, condemned Christoph Probst to death. He was guillotined on the same day as Hans and Sophie Scholl in Munich-Stadelheim. Facing death, he had himself baptized a Catholic.

"Stalingrad!

200,000 of our German brothers have been sacrificed for the prestige of a military con man. The humane conditions set by the Russians for capitulation were kept secret from the sacrificed soldiers. General Paulus was decorated for this mass murder with the "Eichenlaub". Highly placed commanders escaped from the battle for Stalingrad by boarding aircraft. Hitler wouldn't let the trapped men retreat to join the other troops. Now the blood of 200,000 soldiers doomed to die condemns the murderer Hitler. (...)

All of Germany is trapped today, just like Stalingrad was. May all Germans be sacrificed for the ambassador of hatred and the will to destroy! For him, who tortured the Jews to death, annihilated half of the Polish population, intended to obliterate Russia. For him, who took away freedom, peace, happy family life, hope and joy from you and gave you inflated money instead. That cannot, that must not be! Hitler and his regime must fall in order for Germany to survive.

Decide! Stalingrad and the downfall or a future full of hope. And once you've decided, take action!

I have tried to write down the text as completely as possible. I don't wish to give any further explanations."

Christoph Probst's statement on his draft for the pamphlet, Gestapo interrogation protocol, February 21, 1943



Christoph Probst in the Bavarian Highlands

Fencing practise in Munich



"There comes a little boy walking on air."
Christoph Probst with his son Micha, summer 1942



"We had many Jewish friends; our father's second wife was Jewish. Never before had the thought crossed our minds that these people should be any different from us. Now suddenly they were persecuted, deported, abused and killed. A nightmare of fear and concern lay upon us. Life had become scary."
Angelika Probst, 1947

"He was deeply agitated when there was talk of "Euthanasia Programmes", those mass murders of mentally-ill and disabled persons which could not be kept secret in the long run; he was furious over the obligation to wear the Yellow Star in public – especially since his stepmother was Jewish, not to mention the mass crimes in the concentration camps at the eastern front, about which more and more news gradually leaked out."
Bernhard Knoop, 1983

"Our best friend was Alexander Schmorell, a German-Russian whom my brother had met at school and whom we'd had a very deep connection and spent all our holidays with."
Angelika Probst, 1947

In his farewell letter to his sister Angelika he wrote: "Don't ever forget that life is nothing but growing through love and preparing for eternity."

From a letter written to his mother before his execution:

"I want to thank you for the gift of life. When I think about it, it has always been but a way to God. I am just getting a step ahead of you all now, in order to prepare for you a magnificent welcome."

With one-year-old Micha,
summer 1941



At home in
Ruhpolding, 1941

Alexander Schmorell

Alexander Schmorell was born at Orenburg/Urals in Russia on September 16, 1917. The name Alexander was given him in accordance with the customs of the Russian Orthodox Church; his friends and family called him "Schurik" or "Alex".

Alexander's mother was Russian. She died when he was still a small child. In 1921 his father, a Russian doctor, moved to Munich with his four-year-old son. The Russian nanny, who replaced the mother Alex hardly ever knew, came with them. Since she spoke only a little German, Alexander grew up bilingual. He could communicate in German and was a German citizen; however, Russian, the language of his childhood, of children's songs and prayers, was his actual mother tongue; he thought of Russian culture as his spiritual home.

After his "Abitur" he was forced into the "Reichsarbeitsdienst" (National Labour Service) and later compelled to join the "Wehrmacht". His cavalry unit was deployed first during the invasion of Austria by German troops in 1938 and later during the occupation of Czechoslovakia.

When Alexander Schmorell was supposed to swear the obligatory oath of allegiance to Adolf Hitler he asked, in vain, to be discharged from the Wehrmacht. The drill and uniformity of military life were at odds anyway with his striving for independence and freedom. Through this conflict Alexander found himself a declared enemy of the Nazi regime. Making music, translating Russian literature, drawing and sculpturing all became expressions of his refusal and opposition. He only continued his medical studies to do his parents a favor.

Alexander Schmorell met Hans Scholl in the Second Students' Company in the fall of 1940. He often invited him to his parents' house in Munich-Harlaching. There like-minded people got together, read and discussed theological, philosophical and literary works. For the "recreation of the soul", as Alexander put it once. Christoph Probst, whose close friend he had been since his time at the high school in Munich, was one of them.

Together with his friends from the White Rose circle, Alex was forced to serve as a medical orderly on the eastern front. For Alexander this deployment into "enemy territory" meant returning home. He made contact with and carried on conversations with Russian inhabitants of the

villages. Willi Graf wrote: "Being here with Alex it is easier to find access to the country. We have often sat with the farmers and sung and had them play their wonderful old songs for us."

From the beginning of the White Rose in Munich, Alexander Schmorell participated decisively in all its activities. He and Hans Scholl composed the first leaflets. Alex wrote that part of the second one which for the first time brought the murder of the Jews to public notice.

After the arrest of the Scholl siblings Alexander Schmorell was put on the wanted list. Despite the courageous and daring help of friends, among them Lilo Ramdohr and Nikolay Hamazaspian, all his attempts to escape failed. During an air raid on February 24, 1943 he was recognized in a Munich shelter by an acquaintance, betrayed and promptly arrested.

On April 19, 1943 Roland Freisler, presiding over the People's Court, condemned Alexander Schmorell to death. He was guillotined in Munich-Stadelheim on July 13, that same year.



Alexander Schmorell on his way to the eastern front, July 1942



Urban vagrants in Munich: studies by Alexander Schmorell

During a lecture at Munich University, 1940



"We knew quite well that the production of pamphlets hostile to the State was an action against the National Socialist government and that this would lead to the severest punishment in the case of an investigation. I didn't act unwittingly – I always understood that I could lose my life in the event of an investigation. I ignored all this because my deep urge to combat the National Socialist State was stronger."

Alexander Schmorell, Gestapo transcript of the interrogation, February 26, 1943.

"Agitation, terrible agitation dominates my present life. I couldn't bear being here much longer if it wasn't for some obligations I have. They give me the moral right to stay. I have to remain here, at least for now. Once these duties are completed, my time in Germany will be over. And then the burning desire I have carried inside me all my life will finally be fulfilled – then I will return to Russia, to my homeland. Soon, in one week, I'll continue my sculpturing. And all my works used to breathe and will breathe again, they will be full of the same agitation which steals every peaceful minute from me. The reason for this restlessness – who knows? Perhaps it's my character, or perhaps this and that."

Excerpt from a letter Alexander Schmorell wrote to his Russian friend Nelly, December 9, 1942

"We had the same idea of helping people in danger, the same idea of friendship; to us those were not only theoretical terms or empty words, but action – we turned our theories and our thoughts into action. That's why we, in our innermost attitude, before founding the White Rose, came to the conclusion that one must resist injustice and violence at all costs – at a time when violence was triumphant. (...)

I was very much into the work of Dostojevski, and Alexander Schmorell – 'Schurik' – also appreciated him very much. Together we read The Karamazov Brothers and particularly the chapter The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor. The inquisitor's way of thinking reminded us of the Nazis. The inquisitor wants to make people happy by force. Apparently, only the Führer and the party could bring comfort and happiness, and everyone who didn't agree had to be eliminated. What could be done? Shouldn't one fight, protest? Yes, it is necessary, as far as strength permits."

Nikolay Hamazaspian, 1987

Hans Scholl

Hans Scholl was born on September 22, 1918 in Ingersheim/Württemberg. Scholl sen. was the mayor. In 1932 the family moved to Ulm, where his father took over a fiduciary office for economic and tax consultancy.

Against his parents' opposition Hans Scholl joined the Hitler Youth in 1933, became "Fähnleinführer" (troop leader) and organized activities in an adventurous and daring way, close to nature so that many boys strove to join his troop. Disappointed by the reality of National Socialism and the bureaucratic, party-controlled heteronomy within the group, he sought contact with members of the by now forbidden dj.1.11. This was a branch of the youth movement with more cultural and socio-critical ambitions compared to the simple nature romanticism of other youth groups.

In 1937 Hans Scholl was temporarily arrested for the "continuation of forbidden activities of the free youth movement". New friendships grew out of a common rejection of the increasingly obvious dictatorship.

In March of that same year Hans passed his "Abitur" and graduated from the "Oberrealschule" in Ulm. He was then drafted into the National Labour Service, after which he served two years in the "Wehrmacht" as part of a cavalry unit in Bad Cannstatt.

In the spring of 1939 he started studying medicine in Munich; he was billeted in army barracks. Despite the obligatory service in a students' company, he found opportunities for conversations with like-minded people.

In the summer of 1940 he took part in the France campaign as a sergeant in the medical corps. While reading modern French writers, philosophers and theologians he discovered an unorthodox Christianity.

In the fall of 1940 he was able to continue his studies in Munich. He considered studying history and politics at a later date. He established contacts with "neutralized" Munich intellectuals, with scientists, philosophers, artists and journalists.

From July to October 1942 Hans Scholl served as a medic on the eastern front, together with his friends Alexander Schmorell, Willi Graf, Hubert Furtwängler and Jürgen Wittenstein.

After the leaflet campaign earlier that summer, en-masse production and distribution of the fifth pamphlet in January 1943, writing of slogans on the walls of public buildings, Hans Scholl and his sister Sophie were

arrested while laying out the sixth leaflet at the University on February 18, 1943.

Both were sentenced to death along with their friend Christoph Probst by Roland Freisler, presiding over the People's Court, on February 22, 1943. The three friends were guillotined on the same day.

On the table in his cell the following note was found: "Cross, you will remain the light of the world for a long time. Hellas, our love is eternal." (Stefan George).

In front of the scaffold, before his execution, he shouted: "Long live freedom!"



Hans Scholl, 1941:
resting on a hike



In late 1939, Hans Scholl with his friend Enno v. Bresser at dissecting class



On his way home to Bad Tölz



Hans Scholl,
Munich in 1941



French Campaign,
1940

"I had become convinced that the military situation, after the defeat at the eastern front and the enormous increase of England's and America's military power, made a victory for us impossible. So after long and painful thinking I realized that there was only one way to keep up the European idea, and that was shortening the war. On the other hand the treatment of the territories and nations occupied by us horrified me. I couldn't picture a peaceful reconstruction in Europe after ruling by such methods. From similar considerations grew my scepticism about this state and because, as a citizen, I cared a great deal about the fate of my people, I decided to express my views not only in thoughts but by taking action. That's how the idea of composing and producing leaflets entered my mind." Hans Scholl, Gestapo transcript of the interrogation, February 20, 1943

"These days, I have to be the way I am. Physically and innermost, I am far away from you. But never foreign. Never before has my respect for your pure soul been greater than now that life has become a permanent danger. But since I have chosen the danger myself, I have to move towards my aim freely, without any ties. I have walked down many wrong paths, and I know it. Abysses open, my restless heart is surrounded by deepest night – but I plunge myself into it. How great are Claudel's words: 'La vie, c'est une grande aventure vers la lumière.'" Hans Scholl to Rose Nägele, February 16, 1943

"The next morning I accompanied Sophie and Hans to the University to hear a lecture by Professor Huber on Leibniz. At the entrance to the building there was a swarm of students staring at the wall. When we came closer we saw the word FREEDOM in huge black letters, over one meter in size. Several cleaning women were trying to scrub off the slogan. An older student said to Sophie: 'Those bastards!' Hans pushed us to move on, saying: 'We don't want to draw any attention to us.' Walking away, Sophie whispered to me: 'Well, they'll be scrubbing for a long time. It's coal-tar paint!'" Elisabeth Hartnagel-Scholl, 1968

"I was on my way to university and saw Hans approaching from the opposite direction. Nothing revealed his plans – not a glance, no looking around. He passed the pointing, indignant people with long strides and slightly stooped – there was only a small, high-spirited smile on his very alert features. When we entered the University and passed by crowds of cleaning women with buckets, brooms and brushes who were about to scrub the writing off the stone walls, his smile grew stronger and when an excited student came running towards us with the words: "Have you seen it yet?", Hans laughed out loud and said: "No, what?" And from that moment on I was terrified for him." Traute Lafrenz, 1946.

Sophie Scholl

Sophie Scholl was born the fourth of five children in Forchtenberg/Württemberg on May 9, 1921. She went to a high school for girls in Ulm from 1932 until her graduation in 1940.

In 1934 she joined the Hitler Youth and played a leading role in her HJ girls' troop.

She was a gifted draughtswoman and painter. She became familiar with the works of 'degenerate' artists. She found her world to be opposed to the ideals of National Socialism, both in literature and through her increasing attachment to philosophy and theology.

As a result of the arrests of her brothers and their friends in November 1937, she felt alienated from the Hitler Youth. She knew about the dissenting political orientation of her father, of some friends and women teachers. A person's political attitude became an essential criterion in choosing her friends.

After her graduation in 1940 she decided to become a qualified nursery-school teacher, in the hope of avoiding the "Reichsarbeitsdienst" (National Labour Service). This proved an illusion: starting in the spring of 1941, she had to do six months of National Labour Service in Krauchenwies near Sigmaringen. That was followed by another six months of auxiliary war service as an after-school day-care teacher in Blumberg near Donaueschingen. The barrack-like National Labour Service made her contemplate and practise passive resistance.

In May 1924 Sophie Scholl could finally register for biology and philosophy at the University of Munich. Her brother Hans, who was already studying medicine there, introduced her to his friends. These were above all politically motivated, but they still enjoyed hiking in the mountains, skiing and swimming. Moreover, they read literature, played music and often attended concerts.

In Munich they established contacts with writers, philosophers and artists, especially with Carl Muth and Theodor Haecker. The latter became important contacts for Sophie's concern with the Christian faith. The question of how the individual should act under a dictatorship became the focus of attention.



At the National Labour Service in Krauchenwies, June 1941



Sophie Scholl, at the River Iller near Ulm, summer 1938



During a hike (Whitsun) with her youngest brother Werner, missing in 1944



Semester break at home, 1942

In 1942 Sophie Scholl had to help produce arms at a metallurgical plant in Ulm. During that time her father was serving a jail sentence because of a critical remark he had made about Hitler in front of a woman employee.

Once Sophie knew about the leaflets, she participated as much as she could in the production of the last two and their distribution in several South German cities. While laying out copies of the sixth pamphlet at the University of Munich on February 18, 1943 she was arrested.

On February 22 Sophie Scholl was condemned to death by Roland Freisler, presiding over the People's Court, together with her brother Hans and their friend Christoph Probst. A few hours later they were executed by guillotine.

The chaplain, Dr. Alt, reported with admiration how prison officials spoke with respect of the courage with which she had walked to her execution.

"Closing question: Throughout the two days of the interrogation, we have discussed, even if only flittingly, different political and ideological questions. After these discussions have you not come round to the view that your way of acting and your activities with your brother and other persons, especially at this stage of the war, must be considered a crime against the community and even more so now that our troops are facing difficult and tough fighting in the East, and that this crime deserves the strongest condemnation?"

Answer: From my point of view the answer to this question must be no. I am still of the opinion I have done the best I could for my people. That is why I do not regret the way I acted and I am ready to face the consequences resulting from what I have done."

Sophie Scholl, Gestapo interrogation protocol, February 20, 1943.

"Sophie certainly was not a cold, calculating person, on the contrary: she could be very soulful, but it was characteristic of her to think things through with her sharp mind and logical consistency. In the winter of 1941/1942, in a big propaganda campaign, the German population was asked to donate woolens and warm clothes for the Wehrmacht. The German soldiers stood outside Leningrad and Moscow and found themselves in a winter war they weren't prepared for. Coats, blankets and skis were supposed to be handed in. But Sophie's position was: 'We won't give anything.' I had returned straight from the Russian front, back then. I was to deploy a new company in Weimar. When I heard about Sophie's tough reaction, I told her what this kind of position meant for the troops out there, who had no gloves, no pull-overs, and no warm socks. But she held on to her merciless view and explained it with the words: 'It makes no difference whether German or Russian soldiers freeze to death, it is equally terrible. But we must lose the war. If we give woolens now we will just help prolong it.'

This attitude shocked me. We had a fierce discussion. But I slowly had to admit that her point of view was simply consistent. You could only be either for or against Hitler. If you were against him, he must not be allowed to win the war, since only a military defeat could get him out of the way. That meant: helping the so-called enemy and harming us Germans was the sole way to bring us freedom."
Fritz Hartnagel

"I have learned that a tough spirit without a gentle heart is just as infertile as a gentle heart without a tough spirit. I think it was Maritain who said: Il faut avoir un esprit dur et le coeur tendre. A word not experienced by the soul is a dead word and an emotion not giving birth to a thought is futile. "

Sophie Scholl, 1942

"I was Hans' and Sophie's guest in Munich for about 10 days, between late January and February 5, 1943. One evening Hans and Alex Schmorell left for the Gynaecological Clinic, so they claimed. Shortly after, Willi Graf showed up at the apartment. Sophie appeared nervous to me that evening. We went for a walk through the English Garden. During our stroll Sophie told me that something had to be done, for example painting slogans on walls. 'I have a pencil in my pocket', I said. Sophie: 'Something like this has to be done with coal tar.' I: 'But that is terribly dangerous.' Sophie, to distract me: 'Night is the free man's friend.'"

Elisabeth Hartnagel-Scholl, 1968

"What a beautiful, sunny day, and I must leave. But how many have to die on the battlefields these days, how many young lives full of hope. What does my death matter, if thousands of people are shaken up and aroused by our actions."

Sophie's dream the night before her death:

"One sunny day I was carrying a child in a long white dress to its baptism. The way to the church led up a steep hill. But I was holding it firmly and safely in my arms. Suddenly a crevasse appeared in front of me. I had just enough time to place the child safely on the other side, before I fell into the depths. The child is our idea and it will win through despite all obstacles. We have got to pave the way, but we must die for it first."

Sophie Scholl, according to a report of her cell mate Else Gebel

Ulm Senior Year

"As the People's Court it has not escaped our notice that three students from one school class (among them Heinrich Guter) appear in this case and further ones have been mentioned! Something must be wrong with the spirit of the form, something which the senate cannot consider entirely the fault of these young boys. One is ashamed that such a class should exist at a German humanist Gymnasium! But it is not the task of the People's Court to look into the reasons for that."
From the judgment in the second trial against the White Rose,
April 19, 1943

Hans Hirzel *1924 had contacts with Hans Scholl, through whom he was introduced to the circle of friends in Munich in 1942. Hans Hirzel was the first of the group to be interrogated by the Gestapo in Ulm in February 1943; however, he managed to avoid imprisonment and warned the Scholl parents of the danger their children faced in Munich.

In January 1943 Hans Hirzel received a suitcase filled with 2500 pamphlets entitled "Call to all Germans!" (fifth leaflet created by Sophie Scholl).

Franz J. Müller *1924 took on the difficult task of getting together the money for postage and buying enough envelopes. On the organ gallery of the Martin Luther Church, Franz J. Müller and his friend Hans Hirzel, after putting pamphlets into envelopes, addressed and stamped these. Franz J. Müller gave some to acquaintances in the Heilbronn area, especially to Catholic pastors.

Susanne Hirzel *1921 was a friend of Sophie Scholl's. Together with her brother she put most of the leaflets prepared in Ulm into mailboxes in Stuttgart.

Heiner Guter *1925, a like-minded friend and confidant of those involved in strictly secret activities, was a classmate at the Gymnasium in Ulm. There the traditions of classical education were carried on almost untouched by National Socialist propaganda and certain teachers continued to impart sceptical insight and enlightenment.

"Hans Hirzel and Franz Müller – immature boys, seduced by the Enemies of the State – have supported highly treacherous pamphlet propaganda against National Socialism. For this they receive five years in prison.

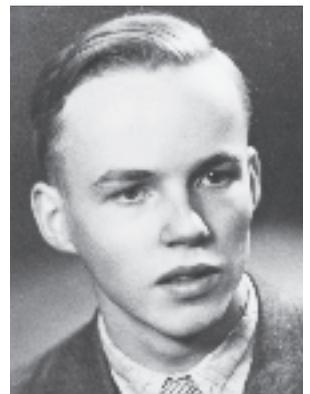
Heiner Guter knew about such propaganda plans without reporting them. For this he is sentenced to eighteen months in prison.

Susanne Hirzel helped distribute highly treacherous leaflets. She did not know that they were highly treacherous; but only because she did not attempt to get a clear picture due to her unforgivable naiveté. She will spend six months in prison."

From the guilty verdict, April 19, 1943

In 1986 Franz J. Müller initiated the idea of a White Rose Foundation, which he established in Munich in 1987 together with participants of the resistance group and relatives of the executed members. It is maintained by the "Städtegemeinschaft im Zeichen der Weißen Rose" (Community of Cities under the Sign of the White Rose).

Franz J. Müller



Hans Hirzel

Jacques Libion *1925 in Paris, fellow prisoner in Heilbronn, reports in 1995: "In October 1941, in Paris, I was condemned to 7 years in prison by a German military court for several acts of sabotage and sent to jail in Heilbronn, Germany. My friend Marquet and I were the only political prisoners until Hans Hirzel, Franz J. Müller and Heiner Guter were committed in late May, 1943. Together we managed to take over some important posts and, especially at the end of the war, gain influence over prisoners and some guards. With the evacuation of the former we were left as a "special unit" in a small village. We were lucky to escape being discovered by an SS patrol, got into a massive artillery attack and eventually surrendered the village to the first US tank which showed up. Shortly after that we met a French liaison officer who legitimized us as political prisoners. In this jail we experienced a German-French cooperation and comradeship which saved our lives. This friendship has lasted until today."

Heinrich Guter



Susanne Hirzel

Heinz Brenner *1924, classmate, a declared and active opponent of Hitler, initiated a resistance group of young Christians in Ulm. In October 1941 they duplicated and distributed the sermons of Bishop Galen against the killings of mentally ill persons. Hans Scholl read these pamphlets.

Heinz Brenner was forced into military service at the age of 18.

In October 1944, due to his personal beliefs, he deserted the army because he no longer wanted to be abused as a soldier for Hitler. Like-minded friends in Oberschwaben helped hide him until the end of the war – at the risk of their own lives.

From France he wrote to his friend Franz J. Müller:

"If you want to know exactly my thoughts, my desires and feelings, you should read F. Dostojewski: 'Memoirs from the House of the Dead'. I am the narrator. But you must accept every single detail as if it were written by me. This is all a terrible strain." November 23, 1942

"Can you imagine I don't feel like writing letters or reading or doing anything at all anymore? How far must I have gotten? The last thing I can wish for now is to live a long life, it's too much, and I can't take any more." December 10, 1942

"When I heard that you and Walter will have to join the army, I almost cried. I am not that important, but what about you and all the others? Such intelligence would be so important for the reconstruction of Europe. If I came home now, which I wouldn't want to – no one is there and the messages of death would slowly arrive – and for whom did they fall? Slowly my spirit is being destroyed, slowly everything is over." January 26, 1943.

Eugen Grimminger

Eugen Grimminger was born in Crailsheim on July 29, 1892. After training for higher administration in the Kingdom of Württemberg at the National Administration School of Stuttgart, he participated voluntarily in the First World War. His experiences at the front turned him into a convinced pacifist. Beginning in 1922, he worked as an auditor for the verification service at the "Württembergische Raiffeisengenossenschaften Stuttgart".

In 1935 he was dismissed without notice due to his marriage with Jenny Stern, who was Jewish, and his opposition to the NS regime. He started working, self-employed, as an economic trustee and a tax consultant in Stuttgart.

In 1938 he helped his Jewish friends Schöllkopf and Gabriel to flee to Switzerland by procuring forged passports for them. On August 31, 1939, one day before the outbreak of the Second World War, he successfully took two of his sisters-in-law to France, from where they escaped to England.

In 1942 Robert Scholl was condemned to four months' imprisonment by the Special Court at Ulm for a critical remark he had made. During this time his friend Eugen Grimminger immediately took over the management of the office without thinking twice. This was probably how his contact with Hans Scholl was established. Eugen Grimminger became one of the few older accessories involved in the leaflet activities of the White Rose and was their most important financial sponsor.

On March 2, 1943 Eugen Grimminger was arrested and condemned to ten years' imprisonment by the People's Court in Munich at the second trial against the White Rose. It was only thanks to his secretary Tilly Hahn, who spoke up for him as a witness, that he was not sentenced to death. She had run several errands to Hans Scholl in Munich on his orders. Shortly after the apprehension of Hans and Sophie Scholl, she wanted to take a duplicating machine to their apartment. Luckily, at the entrance to the building, she was warned that the Gestapo were searching the place. After the war Tilly Hahn became Grimminger's second wife.

Eugen Grimminger was kept in custody at Ludwigsburg penitentiary from his conviction until the end of war.

His wife Jenny was murdered after eight months of imprisonment in Auschwitz on December 2, 1943. His sister-in-law Senta was transported to Riga and was put to death there along with her children.

In 1945 Eugen Grimminger was summoned to be chief executive of nutrition and agriculture by the American military government in Württemberg. There he was president of the agricultural cooperatives until his retirement.

Eugen Grimminger died at the age of 93 on April 10, 1986.

"In 1922 I married a woman of Jewish origin. I experienced the hatred and contempt of the Nazis in my home country. After the takeover I was denounced for political unreliability, for belittling the National Socialist body of thought and for the Jewish interrelation. In 1935 I was dismissed without notice after proceedings before the state-run association of farmers (Landesbauernschaft)." Eugen Grimminger, from Willi Bohn: "Stuttgart: secret!" 1978

"My sister-in-law Senta was a widow and her children, in order of age, were called Trudel (16), Fritz (14), Lore (10) and Ilse (7). They were taken in a group transport from Stuttgart to Riga. Collecting the Jews in Stuttgart took place at "Höhenpark Killesberg", where today a plaque reminds us of those ignominious events. I accompanied them to the Killesberg and with them wearing the Yellow Star I experienced the jostling and impudence of SS people."

"The true aim of the former resistance group has been forgotten all too fast. It was a fight for freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom to fashion your own life, tolerance and the observance of human rights." Eugen Grimminger to Thorsten Müller, 1971

Eugen Grimminger
with his wife Jenny



Saarbrücken group

Students from the Reform-Gymnasium, members of the Catholic Students' Association "Neudeutschland":

Heinz Bollinger *1916 was determined to practise active resistance beyond his basic anti-National-Socialist attitude as early as 1941. Without any pangs of conscience – as he later emphasized in conversations with Anneliese Knoop-Graf and Franz J. Müller – he wanted to shoot Hitler as soon as an opportunity presented itself.

As a philosophy assistant in Freiburg he gathered a circle of Hitler opponents around him. However, this group could not function properly because of constant conscription into the Wehrmacht.

Willi Graf informed the brothers Heinz and Willi Bollinger about the activities of the White Rose in Munich during his Christmas break in 1942/43. Both agreed to participate.

In late January 1943 in Ulm, Heinz Bollinger received the fifth pamphlet from Willi Graf for distribution in Freiburg. He expressed some doubts saying that even more bombs would have to fall first, "before this stupid nation understands anything".

On March 5 Heinz Bollinger was arrested. During the second trial against the White Rose he was condemned to 7 years in prison by the People's Court for "Knowing about highly treacherous subversive activities" and listening to "foreign radio news".

US forces released him from Ludwigsburg prison on April 12, 1945.

Dr. Heinz Bollinger was a professor at the College of Education in Lörrach from 1966.

He died in Freiburg in 1990.

Willi Bollinger *1919 was the most active of the friends recruited by Willi Graf in Saarbrücken during his Christmas break in 1942/43.

As a medical orderly in the office of the reserve hospital "Heilig Geist", he procured weapons and faked marching orders, which allowed Willi Graf and other members of the White Rose to travel relatively safely in order to distribute the leaflets.

On January 20, 1943 Willi Graf brought him the fifth pamphlet and a proof press. Willi Bollinger produced 200 copies, sent them to personalities he knew in Saarbrücken and showed them to Medical Officers at the reserve hospital. After his brother Heinz was arrested, Willi disposed of weapons, proof press and rubber gloves in the River Saar, destroying all traces of his activities.

Months later he was interrogated by the Gestapo. "Deny everything!" wrote his brother in a secret message from Ludwigsburg prison. Willi Bollinger was not put in custody. However, it was suddenly taken into consideration that he had "failed to report it to the police in order to spare a companion of his youth and not some third person". On April 3, 1944 the District Court of Saarbrücken sentenced him to 3 months in jail for "Not reporting a highly treacherous activity". His defense counsel was Dr. Hubert Ney, who later became Minister-President of Saarland.

After graduating from university Willi Bollinger worked as a qualified chemist.

He died in Wuppertal in 1975.



Heinz Bollinger

Helmut Bauer *1919 was ready to participate in the distribution of the leaflets of the White Rose.

Heinz Bollinger accepted him and Rudi Alt, another friend of Willi Graf's from the Saarland, into his resistance group in Freiburg during his time at university. He told them about the activities of the White Rose in Munich and acquainted them with the contents of the fifth pamphlet in late January 1943.

Helmut Bauer was condemned to 7 years' imprisonment together with Heinz Bollinger by the People's Court. While working at the "Hoher Asperg" as a medical assistant in the tuberculosis ward for German prisons, he got infected.

After his release in 1945 Helmut Bauer completed his medical studies and worked as an intern.

He died of tuberculosis in 1952.

Helmut Bauer



Willi Bollinger



"Thinking about the events of 1942/43 20 years later and trying to remember one's personal dramatic position, one poses the question: What had to happen to make a young person, with a sheltered upbringing, become willing to take any risks in order to oppose prevailing popular opinion?"

The younger generation at that time, just like today, tried to create their own world. At the beginning of the 30's intellectual life was extremely lively in the border town of Saarbrücken. On countless evenings young, like-minded people talked together, critically asking about mandatory imperatives. In theological working groups we tried to find a deeper connection to our faith. Poetry readings, musical events and philosophical discussions filled most of our free time. We also regularly went on hikes, trips and camping.

In 1935, after the reintegration of the Saarland, we all felt the icy breath of National Socialism. Jewish classmates, with whom we had so far been comrades, were defamed. Our own course of action, which had given us fulfilment up to that point, was branded illegal. The youth was forced to march in step with National Socialism. Powerless we had to look on as teachers, friends and relatives whom we had admired fell for this new poison. We had more and more doubts about the society in which we were growing up. Especially for young people, it is hard to remain silent when one experiences injustice. The adults' wisdom that prudence demanded they should put up with this injustice was not good for the young soul. From as early as 1936/37, there was less and less courage. Despite the ban, we managed to keep in contact and speak openly with each other. Before the age of twenty, each member of our circle had already had to deal with the Gestapo. During the war, due to the different personal experiences, tension increased between us and people around us we could not comprehend anymore."

Willi Bollinger, 1962

Falk Harnack

Falk Harnack was born the third child of a well-known German family of scholars in Stuttgart on March 2, 1913. The influence of his 12-year-old brother Arvid, his senior and an important mentor since the death of their father, along with a humanist upbringing, made him immune to National Socialism. Opponents of the Nazis, among them many artists and intellectuals, met at Arvid's apartment in Berlin. Here, as a young student, Falk met future members of the resistance group, led by Arvid Harnack and Harro Schulze-Boysen, later called "Rote Kapelle" (Red Chapel) by the Gestapo.

As early as May 1934 Falk and some friends organised the first illegal leaflet action against the NS Students' Association at the University of Munich.

In 1936 he completed his doctorate with a thesis on the playwright Karl Bleibtreu, a pioneer of Naturalism and a representative of a very committed literature. Falk Harnack's academic mentor was Professor Arthur Kutscher. The artist's conviction that he shouldn't withdraw from the social conflicts of his time, that he should declare his personal position, became Falk Harnack's credo, too, as his life and work attest. The outbreak of the Second World War and conscription into the army interrupted his very short career as a theatre producer.

In the fall of 1942 Arvid (his brother) and his wife Mildred, an American literature scholar at the University of Berlin, were arrested by the Gestapo.

On December 22 the first eleven of over fifty members of the Red Chapel were hanged in Berlin-Plötzensee, among them Arvid Harnack and Harro Schulze-Boysen. On February 16, 1943 Mildred Harnack was beheaded.



Falk Harnack 1935



Arvid and Mildred Harnack

Falk Harnack 1944



Falk Harnack 1965



With the assistance of their mutual friend Lilo Ramdohr, Alexander Schmorell established contact with Falk Harnack in early November 1942, and together with Hans Scholl he visited him in Chemnitz. The friends from Munich hoped to forge links with resistance groups in Berlin. Falk helped establish such a connection with the aid of his cousins Dietrich Bonhoeffer, pastor, and Klaus Bonhoeffer, syndic of the German Lufthansa.

In Sophie and Hans Scholl's apartment in Munich, Falk got together with Hans Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, Professor Huber and Willi Graf on February 9, 1943. Hans Scholl arranged a meeting in Berlin for February 25, 1943 in order to get in touch with the Berlin resistance groups. Harnack waited in vain. Only two days later did he receive a coded telegram from Lilo Ramdohr telling him that the Scholl siblings had been executed.

On March 6 Falk Harnack himself was arrested and appeared before Freisler's People's Court in the second trial against the White Rose. Contrary to expectations he was acquitted for lack of evidence.

In August his military unit was transferred to Athens. A secret command by Himmler on December 20 demanded his exclusion from the Wehrmacht and transportation to a concentration camp. Having been warned in time by one of his superiors, he avoided apprehension by fleeing. Friends from the Greek resistance took him into the liberated territory to the headquarters of the Greek liberation army E.L.A.S. There, together with Gerhard Reinhardt, he founded the AKFD – "Antifaschistisches Komitee Freies Deutschland" (Anti-Fascist Committee for a Free Germany), which he would later become leader of. His task was to collect deserters from the Wehrmacht, among them were many 999ers (KZ prisoners forced into military service), and to support partisans through leaflet campaigns.

After the end of the war Harnack returned to Germany via Yugoslavia. Here he learned that four other family members (his uncle Ernst von Harnack, his cousins Dietrich and Klaus Bonhoeffer and his brother-in-law Hans von Dohnanyi) had already been murdered by the SS in the spring of 1945.

Falk Harnack worked as a theatre and film director first in East Germany and then from 1952 in West Germany. In numerous movies he drew convincing portraits of persecution and resistance. He was also frequently engaged in contemporary political arguments.

Dr. Falk Harnack died at the age of 78 in Berlin on September 3, 1991.

"In early November, Hans Scholl and Alexander Schmorell visited me in Chemnitz, where I was based as a soldier. Contrary to the usual practice, we immediately started talking very openly since all of us knew each other. They presented the leaflets they had already printed and distributed as a basis for our discussion. We talked about the two different types of pamphlets: the philosophically embellished ones of the White Rose and the realistic, politically clear ones now being developed. I supported the latter form.

Alexander Schmorell, a tall, handsome and highly imaginative boy, briefly reported on the Munich student-group activities up to that point, especially on the different leaflet campaigns. Scholl, a dark Southern German type, full of energy, led the conversation towards principle political questions. What he wanted was contact with a central point of the resistance movement in Berlin in order to place the organization on a broader basis. He aimed to establish illegal student cells at all German universities, which were then supposed to accomplish perfectly congruent propaganda operations. The politically fundamental discussion showed that, so far, Scholl and Schmorell had acted illegally from an emotionally respectable and idealistic attitude. Now, however, they were looking for practical advice."

Falk Harnack, 1947

Group "Onkel Emil" (Uncle Emil), Berlin

The call "Onkel Emil" served as a warning in moments of great danger. Only after the war did "Onkel Emil" become the name of the resistance group. The initiators in the 1930s were the journalist Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, born in Berlin-Schöneberg in 1901, and her partner, the conductor Leo Borchard, born in 1898 in Moscow, who had been banned since 1936 from exercising his profession due to "political unreliability".

Ruth had read Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf" quite early and sensed what might be in store for Germany. There were many Jewish people among her friends. When they were discriminated against as being "inferior due to their race", branded as Enemies of the State and persecuted as a consequence of the "Beamtengesetz" (The Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service) in 1933, not to mention the boycott of Jews in 1933 and the Nuremberg "Rassengesetze" (racial laws) in 1935, she considered it only natural to help her friends.

Single actions and facilitating emigration were not sufficient any longer. The pogroms of November 9, 1938 ("Reichskristallnacht" – "Crystal Night"), the introduction of the Yellow Star in 1941 and the massively increasing number of deportations as a result of the Wannsee Conference in 1942 demanded the organisation of greater and more complex help.

Ruth Andreas-Friedrich and Leo Borchard banded together more and more with like-minded people. Among their closest friends were: Ruth's daughter, the drama student Karin Friedrich, born in 1925, the master mechanic Kurt Eckmann, the Jewish underground master printer Ludwig Lichtwitz, the jurist Prof. Hans Peters and the chaplain Harald Poelchau of Berlin-Tegel, later of Plötzensee. The latter two were also in contact with the Kreisauer Kreis (Kreisau Circle) and the internist Dr. Walter Seitz, born in 1905, underground since 1944, after being reported to the police – for having refused to certify foreign workers who were ill as fit.

They all knew the sixth pamphlet of the White Rose. Ruth and Karin Friedrich duplicated it and sent it out.

Ruth Andreas-Friedrich reported on the Nazi period – on terror, persecution of Jews and resistance, on the White Rose, the Kreisauer Kreis and the activities of the group "Onkel Emil" – in her diaries, collected in a book entitled "Der Schattenmann" from 1938 –1945 which was published in 1947.

In the preamble, she wrote: "Many among those threatened wouldn't have managed to emigrate, if all Hitler opponents had left the country ahead of them. Countless "submerged" and persecuted people couldn't have lasted to the end without the help of strangers. In this book I intend to show how difficult it was to carry out even the smallest acts of help between bombs and debris, being spied on, suspected, restricted by decrees, separated from the truth, relying on rumours, often without any means of transportation, without electricity, gas, water or telephone."

Ruth Andreas-Friedrich 1938



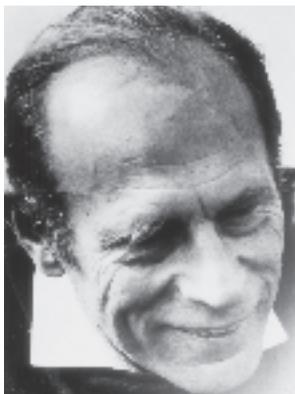
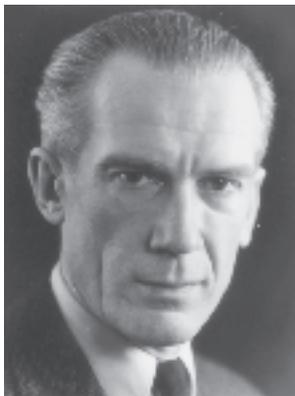
Karin Friedrich

Activities of the Group "Onkel Emil", Berlin-Steglitz, Hünensteig 6:

- Housing and looking after Jews underground and political refugees,
- Arranging alternative accommodation,
- Obtaining food and food ration cards,
- Supplying forged identity papers and stamps, travel permits, service-record substitution cards, medical certificates, prescriptions and medication,
- Taking care of political detainees in prison,
- Duplicating and sending out the sixth leaflet of the White Rose,
- Carrying out industrial sabotage,
- Passing on political information and reports on the situation to other countries,
- Involving all members in the "NEIN" ("NO") campaign of the "Widerstandsgruppen Ernst" from April 18 to April 20, 1945: two nights of painting and propaganda on "NO to defending Berlin!"

The members of the group "Onkel Emil" were never exposed. All of them survived the Nazi era and were liberated by the Red Army in Berlin, April 1945.

Leo Borchard 1944



Walter Seitz 1945

From the diary of Ruth Andreas-Friedrich:

"Berlin, Wednesday, March 10, 1943
What is going on in Munich? Something is said to have happened in Munich. Something illegal, rebellious. The students are rumoured to have risen up. Thousands of pamphlets are supposed to have been distributed. 'Down with Hitler! Long live freedom!' can be read on the walls, people say. Will the storm continue? Has it been suppressed yet? It is claimed that Freisler, the president of the People's Court, has gone to Munich. The truth! We want to know the truth! "

"Berlin, Tuesday, March 23, 1943
Now we know the truth. There came a secret messenger from Munich. He brought a report on the situation and two leaflets. With deep respect we gather around him and listen to the call of our like-minded friends in Munich: 'Fellow students! Fellow students! Shaken, our nation is confronted with the downfall of the men of Stalingrad. The German nation is looking to us. From us it expects the breaking of the National Socialist terror with the power of the spirit.' Frank (pseudonym for Walter Seitz) jumps up. 'Where is the typewriter? Who will type? Who will dictate? If we don't distribute this pamphlet we are not worthy of having read it.' Heike (Karin Friedrich) sits down in front of the typewriter. 'Fellow students!', Frank dictates. By the time we separate, fifty copies are ready. The next day we continue writing".

"Berlin, Saturday, March 27, 1943
We have found a way of smuggling leaflets and situation reports to Switzerland. And a second route to England via Sweden. It is terribly important to us for the people out there to realize that even in Germany there live human beings. So far, the world knows way too little about this."

"In the following days some 250 pamphlets were copied on the typewriter by my mother and me and sent out by mail throughout Berlin and beyond, also to an air-force training camp."

Karin Friedrich, 1994

Service at the Russian Front

On July 23, 1942 Hans Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, Willi Graf, Jürgen Wittenstein and Hubert Furtwängler were posted to the eastern front. After three days they reached Warsaw. Willi Graf wrote in his diary: "Late in the afternoon we enter the city. Misery stares us in the face. We turn away."

The friends were deployed as medical assistants at a casualty clearing post southwest of Moscow near Gshatsk. This section of the front was occasionally quiet.

For the first time they were together for four consecutive weeks. The friends didn't have many service duties so they roamed the forests and went fishing in the river. Since Alexander Schmorell spoke Russian fluently, they got into contact with Russian people and founded a choir made up of girls and prisoners of war and read Dostojevski. They experienced the beauty of the Russian fall, the vast landscape.

Alexander Schmorell faced a painful conflict: he belonged to an army which was supposed to destroy what he loved; later he would testify to this at the People's Court. His friends shared those feelings.

Willi Graf and Hubert Furtwängler were transferred for a time to the front line to take care of wounded soldiers.

On October 30, 1942 the friends returned to Munich in order to continue their studies.

In November 1942 the sixth army broke through to Stalingrad, which resulted in the definitive change of course in the war. This provided a convincing argument for Hans Scholl, Willi Graf, Alexander Schmorell and Christoph Probst in their fifth leaflet, which now could be understood by many Germans:

"Hitler cannot win the war, only prolong it! Make your choice, before it is too late!"

"We spend our days here doing nothing. Not that I am eager for 'work', I only busy myself with medicine in order to escape the empty hours. The non-stop rain does not bother me, either, but the damned inactivity in more important things, the fact that there is no way out, being cut off from everything often annoys me extremely. I was going to send you a postcard from Warsaw, where the entire students' company was still together, but everything went too

fast. It is impossible to give even a faint idea of what has come crashing down on me in Russia from the first day after crossing the border. I don't know where to start describing it. Russia is so gigantic in every way, without any borders, and the inhabitants' love for their land is boundless. The war hits the country like a thunderstorm. But after the storm there is sunshine again. The suffering takes complete possession of the people, cleanses them – and then they laugh again.

I'm in the same company with three good friends who you know. My Russian friend is especially dear to me. I am also trying very hard to learn the Russian language. In the evening we go over to the Russians and drink schnaps with them and sing together.

Apparently, north and south of here, the Russians are attacking with strong forces, but it is not clear yet what will become of this.

Best regards

Yours sincerely, Hans Scholl

And Yours, Alexander Schmorell

And Yours, Willi Graf

And Yours, Hubert Furtwängler"

Letter to Kurt Huber from Russia,
August 17, 1942

"Recently Alex and I buried a Russian. He must have been lying out there for a long time. His head had been separated from his rump and his private parts had decayed. Worms crawled out of the half-rotten clothes. We had almost filled the grave with soil, when we found another arm. In the end we made a Russian cross which we put in the earth at the head of the grave. Now his soul can rest in peace.

I don't have any music around me. I only hear the moaning of the tormented day and night, and when I dream, I hear the sighs of the ones left behind and when I think, all my thoughts end in agony."

Hans Scholl, August 28, 1942



Saying goodbye before leaving for the eastern front, Munich, July 23, 1942.



Service at the Russian front, summer 1942 (from left: Hubert Furtwängler, Hans Scholl, Willi Graf and Alexander Schmorell)



Ukrainian woman in front of her burning house



"The war does not allow man to end his life as man."

The Leaflets of the White Rose

From June 1942 to February 1943, thousands of people in South German cities found pamphlets in their mailboxes calling for resistance against the Nazi Regime: "The leaflets of the White Rose", later "Leaflets of the resistance movement in Germany". They were written by Alexander Schmorell, Hans Scholl and Prof. Kurt Huber.

The six pamphlets were finally composed on typewriters and duplicated with a hectograph. They took the addresses from telephone directories. Obtaining the apparatus, printing ink, paper, envelopes and stamps again and again was a high risk for the group. They sent the propaganda by mail from different cities in order to cover their activities and whereabouts. The leaflets were supposed to inform people, shake their belief in Hitler, arouse feelings of doubt and make the Germans aware of their guilt. They called for passive resistance and the removal of National Socialism.

On February 18, 1943 Hans and Sophie Scholl laid out the sixth pamphlet in the still empty corridors of Munich University. Sophie made a few hundred copies flatter down into the atrium from the second floor. The janitor Jakob Schmied was watching the siblings, detained them and took them to Dr. Haeffner, the University dean. Shortly after, they were arrested by the Gestapo.

Helmuth von Moltke smuggled the sixth leaflet via Scandinavia to England. British airplanes dropped more than 5 million copies over Germany in the fall of 1943. They were titled: "A German pamphlet – manifesto of the students of Munich".

"When I came to the Scholls' apartment on the day of our appointment, Schmorell and Scholl's sister (Sophie) were also there. I arrived around 5 p.m. and Hans was writing the wax stencils that we needed. We assisted each other in the duplication of the leaflets, i.e. we took turns at printing them. Sometimes I operated the duplicator myself or I arranged the printed pamphlets in the correct order. When I left their apartment that night we had prepared approximately 2000 to 2500 leaflets. As far as I know, Schmorell and the Scholl siblings continued working after I had left, that is they went on producing even more.

The very night we made the leaflets mentioned above in his apartment, Hans Scholl asked me to help distribute them in Munich the following night. I agreed and came to the Scholls' on January 28, at around 11 p.m., as arranged. The Scholl siblings and Schmorell were already there. Hans gave me a briefcase full of pamphlets and asked me to spread them around near Sendlingertor Platz. I had finished this task by 1 a.m. and walked back to Scholl's place. Scholl and Schmorell had already come back when I arrived at 1.30 a.m. After chatting for a little while, I walked home to Mandlstraße 1.

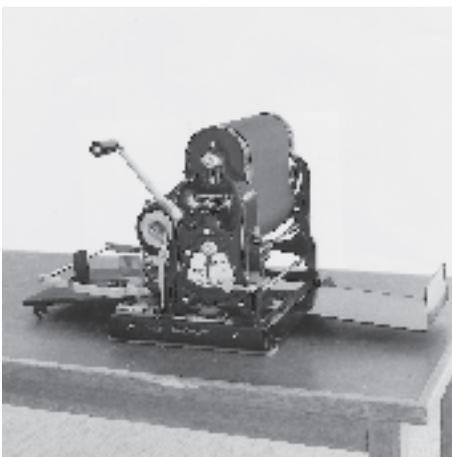
On Sunday February 14, around 10 p.m., I returned to my apartment in Munich from Gaissach. It was not until the following day around 6 p.m. that I went to the Scholls', where Hans and Sophie were sealing and stamping the addressed envelopes containing the leaflets "Fellow Students". I assisted them in getting ready these so-called circulars. Schmorell, who joined us later, also helped. I would estimate about 800 to 1000 students received those pamphlets through the mail. The addresses were taken from a student register, which I saw at Scholl's place. After finishing our preparations we put the propaganda letters into a small suitcase and two briefcases and took them to the post. We left the apartment between 11 and 11.30 p.m. I carried two briefcases full of leaflets, Scholl or Schmorell must have had the suitcase with the same contents and one of them the stencil, paint and brush. First we went to the post office at the corner of Kaulbach- and Veterinärstraße (post office 34), where we dropped off a quarter of the letters. We had already deposited some in a mailbox on our way there. We went straight from there to



Atrium of the
University of Munich



Locations where
the leaflets were
distributed



Hectograph for
the duplication of
the leaflets

the main post office and mailed half of those we had left. The other half we took to the telegraph office at the central station.

After sending out the propaganda letters to the students on our list, there still remained many pamphlets, which were kept in a suitcase in the Scholls' apartment. I don't know how many exactly, but I do know that Scholl had expressed his intention to distribute them inside the University. He planned to lay out the leaflets in the corridors during lectures."

Willi Graf, Gestapo interrogation protocol, 1943

"All exits of the university were blocked. The students were told to assemble in the atrium. Each of the students who had taken a leaflet was to return it to a collector who had been assigned this task. We were standing there for two hours, waiting, until Hans Scholl and his sister were eventually led past us in handcuffs. He looked at us one more time, but did not move a muscle in his face which could have shown recognition. He must have been aware that any fellow students familiar to him would have been suspected by the Gestapo."

Christa Meyer-Heidkamp

Leaflets of the White Rose

Nothing is more dishonourable for a civilized people than to let itself be "governed" without resistance by an irresponsible clique of rulers devoted to dark instincts. Is it not true that every honest German today is ashamed of his government? And who among us can sense the dimensions of the dishonor that will lie upon us and our children once the veil has fallen from our eyes and the most horrid and extravagant crimes come to light? If German people are already so corrupted and spiritually crushed that they do not raise a hand, frivolously trusting in a questionable faith in the lawful order of history; if they surrender man's highest principle, that which raises him above all other God's creatures, his free will; if they abandon the determination to take decisive action and turn the wheel of history and thus subject it to their own rational decision; if they are so devoid of all individuality, have already gone so far along the road to turning into a spiritless and cowardly mass – then they clearly deserve their downfall.

Goethe speaks of the Germans as a tragic people, similar to the Jews or the Greeks, but today it would appear rather as a shallow, spineless herd of followers robbed of their core with the marrow sucked out of them, who are now just waiting to be hounded to their destruction. So it seems – but it is not so. Through gradual, treacherous, systematic violation, every single person has rather been put into a prison of the mind, which he only realizes after finding himself already in chains. Only a few have recognized the impending doom and their heroic warnings have been rewarded with death. The fate of these persons will be spoken of later.

If everyone waits for his neighbour to take the first step, the messengers of the vengeful nemesis will come ever closer, and the very last victim will senselessly be thrown into the throat of the insatiable demon. Therefore, every individual must be aware of his responsibility as a member of western culture and put up as fierce a fight as possible, he must work against the scourges of mankind, against fascism and any similar system of totalitarianism. Offer resistance – *resistance* – wherever you may be, stop this atheistic war machine from running on and on, before it is too late; before the last city, like Cologne, lies in ruins; and before the nation's last young man has bled to death somewhere on the battlefields for the hubris of a subhuman. Don't forget that every people deserves the regime it is willing to endure!

Excerpt from Friedrich Schiller's *The Legislation of Lycurgus and Solon*:

"...Viewed in relation to its purpose, the legal code of Lycurgus is a masterpiece of political science and knowledge of human nature. He desired a powerful, indestructible state, firmly established on its own principles. His goal was to achieve political power and permanence, and he attained this goal to the fullest extent possible under the circumstances. But if one compares Lycurgus' purpose with those of mankind, then a deep disapproval must take the place of the admiration which we felt at first glance. Anything may be sacrificed for the good of the State except that end which the State itself only serves

as a means. The State is never an end in itself; it is important only as a condition under which the purpose of mankind can be attained, and this purpose is no less than the development of all human resources, progress. If a political constitution prevents the development of the capabilities which reside in man, if it interferes with the progress of the human spirit, then it is reprehensible and injurious, no matter how excellently devised, how perfect in its own way. Its very permanence in that case amounts more to a reproach than to a basis for fame; it becomes a prolonged evil, and the longer it endures, the more harmful it is.

...At the cost of all moral feeling a political merit was achieved, and the resources of the state were mobilized to that end. In Sparta there was no conjugal love, no mother love, no filial love, no friendship; all men were citizens only, and all virtue was civic.

...It was the Spartans' duty by law to be inhuman to their slaves; with these unhappy victims of war humanity itself was insulted and mistreated. In the Spartan code of law the dangerous principle was promulgated that men were to be looked upon as means and not as ends – thus the foundation of natural law and of morality was legally demolished.

...What an admirable spectacle is given, by contrast, by the rough warrior Gaius Marcius in his camp before Rome, when he sacrifices vengeance and victory because he cannot bear the sight of a mother's tears!"

"...The State [of Lycurgus] could endure only under one condition: if the spirit of the people became quiescent. Hence it could be maintained only if it failed to achieve the highest, the sole purpose of a State."

From Goethe's *The Awakening of Epimenides*, Act II, Scene 4

SPIRITS

Though he who has boldly risen from the abyss
Through an iron will and cunning
May conquer half the world,
Yet to the abyss he must return.
Already a terrible fear has seized him;
In vain will he resist!
And all who still hung onto him
Must perish in his fall.

HOPE

Now I meet my good men
Who have gathered in the night,
To wait in silence, not to sleep.
And the glorious word of liberty
They lisp and stammer,
Till in unaccustomed newness,
On the steps of our temple

Once again in delight we cry:
(with conviction, loudly:)
Freedom!
(more moderately:)
Freedom!
(echo from all sides and ends:)
Freedom!

Please make as many (carbon) copies as you can of
this leaflet and distribute it!

Leaflets of the White Rose

II

It is impossible to deal with the subject of National Socialism in an intellectual way, since it is non-intellectual. One cannot refer to a National Socialist world view, for if there was such a thing, one would have to try to prove it or combat it with intellectual means – but reality presents a totally different picture; at its very inception this movement depended on the deception and betrayal of one's fellow man; even then it was inwardly rotten and could save itself only through constant lies. Hitler himself, in an early edition of "his" book (one written in the worst German I have ever read; and still it has been elevated to a bible by the nation of poets and thinkers), wrote: "You would never believe how much one has to delude a people in order to rule it." If at the start this cancerous ulcer in the nation was not particularly noticeable, it was only because there were still enough good forces to keep it under control. As it grew ever larger, however, and finally attained ruling power through an ultimate mean corruption, the tumour broke open, as it were, besmirching the whole body. Most of its former opponents went into hiding. The German intellectuals fled to their cellars, where they gradually choked to death, like plants struggling in the dark, away from light and sun. Now the end is near. Now it is our task to find one another again, to spread information from person to person, to keep a steadfast purpose, and to allow ourselves no rest until the very last man is persuaded of the urgent need for him to fight against this system. When thus a wave of rebellion goes through the land, when "it is in the air", when many join the cause, then in a great final effort this system can be shaken off. After all, an end in terror is better than terror without end.

We are not in a position to pass final judgment on the meaning of our history. But if this catastrophe can be used to further the public welfare, it will only be by virtue of the fact that we are cleansed by suffering; that we yearn for the light in the midst of deepest night, summon our strength, and finally help in shaking off the yoke which weighs on our world.

We don't want to write about the Jewish Question in this leaflet, we don't want to compose a defending speech – no, we just want to mention a fact as a short example, the fact that since the conquest of Poland *three hundred thousand* Jews have been murdered in this country in the most bestial way. Here we see the most terrifying crime against human dignity, a crime that is unparalleled in the entire history of mankind. The Jews, too, are human beings – no matter what position one takes on the Jewish Question – and against human beings a crime of this dimension has been perpetrated. Someone might say that the Jews deserve their fate. This assertion would be a monstrous presumption; but let us assume that someone said this – what position has he then taken on the fact that the entire Polish aristocratic youth has been annihilated (May God grant that this is not yet the case!) ? In what way, they would ask, did something like this happen? All male offspring of noble lineage between the ages of fifteen and twenty were transported to concentration camps in Germany and sentenced to forced labour, and all the girls of this age group were

sent to Norway, into the brothels of the SS! Why tell you these things, since you are fully aware of them – or if not of these, then of other equally grave crimes committed by this frightful subhumanity? Because here we touch on a problem which involves us deeply and *forces* us all to take thought. Why does the German people behave so apathetically in the face of all these abominable crimes, crimes so unworthy of the human race? Hardly anyone wonders or worries about it. It is accepted as a fact and put out of mind. And once again the German people slumbers on in its dull, stupid sleep and encourages these fascist criminals, giving them the opportunity to carry on with their savageries; and of course they do so. Should this be a sign that the Germans have become brutalized in their most basic human feelings, that no chord within them cries out at the sight of such deeds, that they have sunk into a fatal coma from which they will never ever awake? So it seems, and so it will certainly be, if the German does not at last start up out of his stupor, if he does not protest wherever and whenever he can against this clique of criminals, if he shows no compassion for these hundreds of thousands of victims. He must display not only compassion; no, much more: a sense of *complicity*. For through his apathetic behaviour he gives these evil men the opportunity to act as they do; he tolerates this "government" which has taken upon itself such an infinitely great burden of guilt; indeed, he himself is to blame for the fact that it came about at all! Each and every man wants to exonerate himself from guilt of this kind, each one continues on his way with the calmest, the most placid of consciences. But he cannot exonerate himself; each man is *guilty, guilty, guilty!* It is not too late, however, to do away with this most reprehensible of all miscarriages of government, so as to avoid being burdened with even greater guilt. Now, when in recent years our eyes have been opened, when we know exactly who our adversary is, it is high time to root out this brown horde. Up until the outbreak of war the majority of the German people was blinded; the Nazis did not show themselves in their true colors. But now, now that we have recognized them for what they are, it must be the sole and prime duty, the holiest duty of every German to destroy these beasts!

"If the government is inconspicuous, the people is happy. If the government is intrusive, it is broken. Good fortune, alas! is built upon misery. Good fortune, alas! only masks misery. What shall come of this? We cannot foresee the end. Order is upset and turns into disorder, good is transformed into evil. The people is confused. Has it not been so, day in, day out, for a very long time?

The wise man is therefore rectangular, though he does not bump into others; he has sharp corners, though he does not harm; he is upright but not gruff. He is clear-minded, but he does not strive to be brilliant."

Lao-Tzu

"Whoever undertakes to rule the kingdom and to shape it according to his whim – I foresee that he will fail to reach his goal. That is all.

The kingdom is a living organism. It cannot be constructed, upon my word! He who tries to manipulate it will spoil it, he who tries to take possession of it will lose it.

Therefore: Some creatures go out in front, others follow, some have warm breath, others cold, some are strong, some weak, some attain abundance, others succumb.

The wise man will accordingly forswear excess, he will desist from arrogance and encroachment."

Lao-Tzu

Please make as many (carbon) copies as possible of this leaflet and distribute them.

Leaflets of the White Rose

III

"Salus publica suprema lex".

All ideal forms of government are utopias. A State cannot be constructed on a purely theoretical basis; rather, it must grow and ripen in the way an individual human being matures. But we must not forget that at the starting point of every civilization the State was already there in rudimentary form. The family is as old as man himself, and out of this initial bond, man was endowed with reason, creating for himself a State founded on justice, whose highest law was the common good. The State should exist as a parallel to the divine order, and the highest of all utopias, the *civitas dei*, is the model which in the end it should approximate. We do not want to pass judgment here on the many possible forms of a State – democracy, constitutional monarchy, and so on. But one matter needs to be brought out clearly and unambiguously: every individual human being has a claim to a useful and just State, one which secures the freedom of the individual as well as the good of the whole. For, according to God's will, man is intended to pursue his natural goal, his earthly happiness, in self-reliance and self-chosen activity, freely and independently within the community of life and work of the nation.

But our present "State" is the dictatorship of evil. "Oh, we've known that for a long time," I hear you object, "and we don't need to have it brought to our attention yet again." But, I ask you, if you know that, why do you not bestir yourselves, why do you allow these men in power to rob you step by step, openly and in secret, of one domain of your rights after another, until one day nothing, nothing at all will be left but a mechanized State system presided over by criminals and drunkards? Is your spirit already so crushed by abuse that you forget it is your right – or rather, your *moral duty* – to abolish this system? But if a person no longer can summon the strength to demand his right, then it is an absolute necessity that he should fall. We would deserve to be dispersed throughout the earth like dust before the wind if we did not muster our powers at this late hour and finally find the courage which up to now we have lacked. Do not hide your cowardice under a cloak of prudence! For with each day that you hesitate, failing to oppose this monster from hell, your guilt will keep growing as in a parabolic curve.

Many, perhaps most of the readers of these leaflets are not quite sure how to offer effective resistance. They see no chance to do so. We want to try to show them that everyone is in a position to contribute to the collapse of this system. It won't be possible through individualistic enmity, in the manner of embittered hermits, to prepare the ground for the overturn of this "government" or even bring about the revolution at the earliest possible moment. No, it can be done only through the cooperation of many convinced, energetic people – people who have agreed on the means they must use to attain their goal. We don't have a great deal of choice. There is only one means available to us: *passive resistance*.

The sense and the aim of passive resistance is to topple National Socialism, and in this struggle we must not recoil from any course of action, wherever

it may lie. We must attack National Socialism *whenever* it is open to attack. We must bring this monster of a state to an end as soon as possible. A victory of fascist Germany in this war would have immeasurable, frightful consequences. The military victory over Bolshevism must not become the primary concern of the Germans. The defeat of the Nazis must *unconditionally* be the absolute priority, the greater necessity of this latter demand we will demonstrate to you in one of our forthcoming leaflets.

And now every convinced opponent of National Socialism must ask himself how he can fight against the present "State" in the most effective way, how he can strike it in its most vulnerable places. Through passive resistance, without a doubt. It is obvious that we cannot provide each individual with a blueprint for his acts, we can only suggest them in general terms, and each person has to find the right way for himself to attain this end.

Sabotage in armament plants and war industries, *sabotage* at all gatherings, rallies, and meetings of organizations launched by the National Socialist Party. Obstruction of the smooth functioning of the war machine (a machine for a war that goes on solely to shore up and perpetuate the National Socialist Party and its dictatorship). *Sabotage* in all the areas of science and scholarship which further the continuation of the war – whether in universities, technical colleges, laboratories, research institutes or technical bureaus. *Sabotage* at all cultural events which could potentially enhance the "prestige" of the fascists among the people. *Sabotage* in all branches of the arts even the slightest bit connected with National Socialism or rendering it service. *Sabotage* in all publications, all newspapers in the pay of the "government" that defend its ideology and aid in disseminating the brown lie. Do not give a penny to street collections (even when they are conducted under the cloak of charity). For this is only a disguise. In reality the proceeds benefit neither the Red Cross nor the destitute. The government does not need this money; it is not financially dependent on these collections. After all, the printing presses run continuously to manufacture any desired amount of paper currency. But the people must constantly be kept in suspense; the pressure of the curb must not slacken! Do not contribute to the collections of metal, textiles, and the like. Seek to convince all your acquaintances, including those in the lower social classes, of the senselessness of continuing, of the hopelessness of this war; of our spiritual and economic enslavement at the hands of the National Socialists; of the destruction of all moral and religious values; and urge them to offer *passive resistance*!

Aristotle, Politics: "... and further, it is part [of the nature of tyranny] to strive to see to it that nothing is kept hidden of that which any subject says or does, but that everywhere he will be spied upon, ... further, to set all men against each other, friends against friends, the people against the nobility, and even the rich among themselves. Then it is part of such tyrannical measures to make the subjects poor, in order to be able to pay the bodyguards and to keep them occupied with earning their livelihood so that they will have neither leisure nor opportunity to instigate conspiratorial acts... Further, such taxes on income as were imposed in Syracuse, for under Dionysius the citizens had gladly paid out their whole fortunes in taxes within five years. The tyrant is also inclined to constantly foment wars."

Please copy and distribute!

Leaflets of the White Rose

IV

There is an ancient maxim that we repeat to our children: "He who won't listen will have to feel." But a smart child will not burn his fingers on a hot stove more than once.

In the past few weeks Hitler has chalked up successes both in Africa and in Russia. Consequently, optimism on the one hand and distress and pessimism on the other have grown within the German people with rapidity quite inconsistent with traditional German apathy. From all sides one has heard among Hitler's opponents – the better segments of the population – lamentations, words of disappointment and discouragement, often ending with the question: "Will Hitler now after all...?"

Meanwhile the German attack on Egypt has ground to a halt. Rommel has to hold out in a dangerously exposed position – but the advance in the East is still proceeding. This apparent success has been purchased at the most horrible expense of human life, and so it can no longer be counted an advantage. Therefore we must warn against all optimism.

Who has counted the dead, Hitler or Goebbels? – certainly neither of them. In Russia thousands fall daily. It is the time of the harvest, and the reaper cuts into the ripe grain with broad strokes. Mourning is moving into our country cottages, and no one is there to dry the mothers' tears. Yet Hitler is lying to those whose most precious possession he has stolen and driven to a meaningless death.

Every word that comes from Hitler's mouth is a lie. When he says peace, he means war, and when he blasphemously uses the name of the Almighty, he means the power of evil, the fallen angel, Satan. His mouth is the foul-smelling maw of Hell, and his might is accursed at bottom. True, we must conduct a struggle against the National Socialist terrorist state with rational means; but those who still doubt the existence of demonic powers have failed by far to understand the metaphysical background of this war. Behind the concrete, the perceptible events, behind all objective, logical considerations, we find the irrational element, i.e. the struggle against the demon, against the messenger of the Antichrist. Everywhere and at all times demons have been lurking in the dark, waiting for the moment when man is weak; when unauthorized he leaves his place in the order of creation, founded for him on freedom by God; when he yields to the force of evil, separates himself from the powers of a higher order; and after voluntarily taking the first step, he is driven on to the second and third at a furiously accelerating rate. Everywhere and at all times of greatest need, men have stood up, prophets and saints who cherished their freedom, who pointed to the One God and urged the people to a reversal of its downward course. Man is surely free, but without the true God he is defenceless against evil. He is like a rudderless ship, at the mercy of the storm, an infant without its mother, a cloud dissolving into thin air.

I ask you, you as a Christian struggling with the preservation of your greatest treasures, whether you hesitate, whether you incline toward intrigue or procrastination in the hope that someone else will take up arms in your defence? Has God not given you the

strength, the courage to fight? We must attack evil where it is strongest, and it is strongest in the power of Hitler.

"So I turned and considered all the wrongs that were done under the sun: and behold there were the tears of such as were wronged, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was too much power, so they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead who were already dead more than the living who were still alive..." (Dicta)

"True anarchy is the generative element of religion. Out of the annihilation of every positive element she lifts her gloriously radiant countenance as the founder of a new world... If Europe were about to awaken again, if a state of states, a teaching of political science were at hand! Should hierarchy then... be the principle of the union of states? Blood will stream over Europe until the nations become aware of the frightful madness which drives them in circles. And then, struck by celestial music and made gentle, they will approach their former altars together in a colourful mixture, undertake the works of peace, and hold a great celebration of peace with fervent tears on the smoking battlefields. Only religion can reawaken Europe, establish the rights of the peoples, and install Christianity in new splendour visibly on earth in its office as guarantor of peace." Novalis

We wish emphatically to point out that the White Rose is not in the pay of any foreign power. Although we know that National Socialist power must be broken by military means, we are trying to achieve a renewal from within of the severely wounded German spirit. This rebirth must be preceded, however, by the clear recognition of all the guilt with which the German people has burdened itself, and by an uncompromising battle against Hitler and his all too many accomplices, party members, quislings, and the like. With all brutality the chasm that separates the better part of the nation from everything that has to do with National Socialism has to be opened wide. For Hitler and his followers there is no punishment on earth that commensurates with their crimes. But out of love for coming generations we must make an example after the conclusion of the war, so that no one will ever again feel the slightest urge to try out anything similar. And do not forget the petty scoundrels in this regime; remember their names, so that none will go free! They shall not succeed in rallying to another flag at the last minute, after having contributed to these abominable crimes, and act as if nothing had happened!

To set your minds at rest, we would like to add that the addresses of the readers of the White Rose are not recorded anywhere. They were picked out at random from telephone directories.

We will not be silent. We are your bad conscience. The White Rose will not leave you in peace!

Please copy and send on!

Leaflets of the Resistance Movement in Germany

Appeal to all Germans!

The war is approaching its certain death. As in the year 1918, the German government is trying to focus attention exclusively on the growing threat of submarine warfare, while in the East the armies are constantly in retreat and invasion is expected in the West. Mobilization in the United States has not yet reached its climax, but it already exceeds anything that the world has ever seen. It has become a mathematical certainty that Hitler is leading the German people into the abyss. *Hitler cannot win the war; he can only prolong it.* The guilt of Hitler and his accomplices goes beyond all measure. Just retribution comes closer and closer.

But what is the German people doing? It will not see and will not hear. Blindly it follows its seducers into its own ruin. Victory at any price! is inscribed on their banner. "I will fight to the last man," says Hitler – but in the meantime the war has already been lost.

Germans! Do you and your children want to suffer the same fate that befell the Jews? Do you want to be judged by the same standards as your seducers? Are we to be a nation which is hated and rejected by all mankind forever? No! Therefore, dissociate yourselves from National Socialist subhumanism! Prove by your deeds that you think otherwise. A new war of liberation is about to begin. The better part of the nation will fight on our side. Tear up the cloak of indifference you have wrapped around your hearts. Make your decision *before it is too late!*

Do not believe the National Socialist propaganda which has driven the fear of Bolshevism into your very bones. Do not believe that Germany's welfare is linked to the victory of National Socialism for better or worse. A criminal regime cannot achieve a German victory. Separate in time from everything connected with National Socialism. In the aftermath a terrible but righteous judgment will be meted out to those who stayed in hiding, who were cowardly and hesitant.

What can we learn from the outcome of this war – this war that never was a national one?

The imperialist ideology of force, from whatever side it may come, must be shattered for all time. A one-sided Prussian militarism must never again be allowed to assume power. Only in large-scale cooperation among the nations of Europe can the ground be prepared for reconstruction. Every centralized hegemony, such as the Prussian state has tried to exercise in Germany and in Europe, must be cut down at its inception. The Germany of the future can only be a federal state. At this juncture only a sound federal system can imbue a weakened Europe with new life. The workers must be liberated from their condition of downtrodden slavery under National Socialism through a rational socialism. The illusory structure of autonomous national industry must disappear from Europe. Every nation, every man has a right to the treasures of the world! Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the protection of individual citizens from the arbitrary will of criminal regimes of violence – these will be the bases of the New Europe.

Support the resistance. Distribute the leaflets!

Fellow Students!

Shaken and broken, our nation is confronted with the downfall of the men of Stalingrad. Three hundred and thirty thousand German men have been senselessly and irresponsibly driven to death and destruction by the inspired strategy of our World War I Private First Class. Führer, we thank you!

The German people is in ferment. Will we continue to entrust the fate of our armies to a dilettante? Do we want to sacrifice the rest of German youth to the base ambitions of a Party clique? No, never!

The *day of reckoning has come* – the reckoning of German youth with the most abominable tyrant our people has ever been forced to endure. In the name of German youth we demand restitution by Adolf Hitler's state of our personal freedom, the most precious treasure we have, out of which he has swindled us in the meanest possible way.

We have grown up in a state in which all free expression of opinion has been unscrupulously suppressed. The Hitler Youth, the SA, the SS have tried to regiment us, to revolutionize us, to drug us in the most promising young years of our lives. "Philosophical training" was the name given to the despicable method by which our budding individual reflection and evaluation have been suffocated in a fog of empty phrases. A system of selection of leaders, at once unimaginably devilish and narrow-minded, rears its future party bigwigs in the "Castles of the Knightly Order" as godless, shameless, and ruthless exploiters and assassins – blind, stupid hangers-on of the Führer. We "Intellectual Workers" would be the right ones to put obstacles in the path of this caste of overlords. Soldiers at the front are regimented like schoolboys by student leaders and trainees for the post of Gauleiter, and the lewd jokes of the Gauleiters insult the honor of the women students. *German women students at the University of Munich have given a dignified reply to the besmirching of their honor*, and German students have defended the women in the University and have stood firm. That is a beginning of the struggle for our free self-determination – without which intellectual and spiritual values cannot be created. We thank our brave comrades, both men and women, who have set us shining examples.

For us there is but one slogan: fight against the party! Get out of the party organizations, which want to keep our mouths sealed! Get out of the lecture rooms of the SS corporals and sergeants and the party bootlickers! What we seek is genuine learning and real freedom of opinion. No threat can frighten us, not even the shutting down of our institutions of higher learning. This is the struggle of each and every one of us for our future, our freedom, and our honor under a regime conscious of its moral responsibility.

Freedom and honor! For ten long years Hitler and his accomplices have manhandled, squeezed, twisted, and debased these two splendid German words to the point of nausea, as only dilettantes can, feeding the highest values of a nation to the pigs. They have sufficiently demonstrated, in ten years of destruction of all material and intellectual freedom, of all moral substance among the German people, what they understand by freedom and honor. The frightful bloodbath has opened the eyes of even the

stupidest German – it is a slaughter they have carried out in the name of "freedom and honor of the German nation" throughout Europe, and which they continue to perpetrate every day. The name of Germany is dishonored for all time if German youth does not finally rise up, take revenge, and atone, smashing its tormentors, and setting up a new Europe of the spirit.

Students! The German nation is looking to us.
As in 1813 the people expected us to shake off the Napoleonic yoke, so in 1943 they are looking to us to break the National Socialist terror through the power of the spirit.

Beresina and Stalingrad are burning in the East.
The dead of Stalingrad implore us to take action!

"Rise up, my people, let smoke and flame be our sign!"

Our people stands ready to rebel against the National Socialist enslavement of Europe in a devout new breakthrough of freedom and honor!

NS Justice

"Justice is what benefits the Nation". Under this slogan, the entire justice system – whether public law, civil law or criminal law – was turned into a means of enforcing the National Socialist ideology.

The great majority of judges offered their services to National Socialism. They applied the laws promulgated by the government of the NS State. They also interpreted any surviving regulations in accordance with the spirit of the National Socialists. In that way they met the NSDAP's demand for a "German Law". Juridical thinking was dominated by the "Rassengesetzliche Rechtslehre" (racial law jurisprudence). The party platform of the NSDAP and the will of the Führer, Adolf Hitler, were the guiding rules in all judicial decisions. The principle of equality for all citizens before the law was overruled: discrimination and harassment of Jews were daily features of German court proceedings.

Criminal law became the focus of interest and was turned into "Kampfrecht" (Combat Law). Specific statutes were imposed to fight not only "socially pernicious" criminality but also opponents of the National Socialist regime.

Penal jurisdiction:

In order to expedite sentencing of political opponents, the regime set up Special Courts as early as March 1933. These were presided over by only three professional judges. There were no longer any lay assessors or juries.

When the People's Court of Justice was founded in April 1934, one of the lawyers announced that the court was not there to administer justice, but to eliminate the opponents of National Socialism. Apart from two professional judges there were three lay ones at the People's Court. These National Socialist lay judges had been chosen under the watchful eye of the "Führer". Special Courts and the People's Court had both original and final jurisdiction. There was no such thing as appeal or revision. The prime aim of the verdict was promptness, not justice. The rights of the defendants, as well as their defence, were drastically constricted. Motions to receive evidence could be refused by the court with no reason given. As from 1940, the defendant did not even necessarily get assigned a defense counsel. Even if a legally valid sentence had already been pronounced, the

trial could always be reopened. Thus, for the same deed, someone could be punished a second time, sometimes even more severely than the first.

The range of indictable offences was constantly expanded. The criminal laws of National Socialism did not follow the principle "No punishment without law" – especially not during the war. Instead, the maxim was: anything that deserved punishment according to the "healthy popular instinct" was to be penalized. The actions which constituted a crime became more and more unclear: perfidy, high treason, treasonous aiding and abetting of the enemy, "Wehrkraftzersetzung" (Sabotage of the War Effort) and "Rassenschande" (Racial Disgrace / Defilement) are some of the charges that could be found in many arraignments and verdicts.

National Socialists pushed for capital punishment. They threatened to use it more and more often. At the beginning of 1933 the German penal law provided for the death sentence in the case of only 3 crimes – in more than 40 by 1945. At a conservative estimate, well over 16.000 defendants had been sentenced to death by civil criminal courts of the Third Reich. The People's Court alone can be shown to have passed 5243 death sentences. The convicted were guillotined or hanged in more than 50 places of execution. This killing machine went on working, following precise instructions, right up to the last days of the war.

In 1945 the victors shut down the courts immediately once they marched into Germany. Leading judges and prosecutors as well as top officials of the "Reichsjustizministerium" (Reich Ministry of Justice) were taken into allied custody. One of them was missing: Roland Freisler. He had been killed in an air raid on February 3, 1945.

In 1947 the Third American Military Court No. 3 in Nuremberg held trials against fourteen prominent NS jurists. In its verdict the court used the famous metaphor of the judge who was hiding "the murderer's dagger" under his robe.

But the "Juristenprozess" (the trial of the jurists) had no lasting effect. The German legal profession – and not only they – noted with satisfaction that the American High Commissioner pardoned the condemned in the early 1950s. German jurists working in the judiciary of the Western Zone (and later in the German Federal Republic)

refused to face up to their recent past until far into the 70s. Many judges and prosecutors who had been in office before 1945 returned to office in the Federal Republic. Not a single judge or prosecutor of the Third Reich has yet received a legally binding conviction for his actions while serving under the NS regime.

From Roland Freisler's accession letter to Adolf Hitler, October 15, 1942: "The People's Court will consistently strive to judge a case in accordance with what we believe, my Führer, your personal judgment would be. Heil meinem Führer! Faithfully, Your political soldier Roland Freisler."

Roland Freisler during a trial at the People's Court



Judges receive the NS national emblem to wear on their robes, 1933.



Inmates at Dachau Concentration Camp



Buchenwald:
KZ punishment,
hanging from a tree

Trials against the White Rose

First Trial

On Thursday, February 18, 1943 Hans and Sophie Scholl were apprehended at the University of Munich. Hans Scholl had with him the draft of another leaflet, written by Christoph Probst, which he tried to tear up while being arrested. The janitor Jakob Schmied was watching this and reported it to the Gestapo. Four days of non-stop interrogations in the Wittelsbacher Palais, the Gestapo Headquarters for South Germany, followed.

After the arrest of Christoph Probst, who was married and the father of three little children, Hans and Sophie Scholl confessed to carrying out the campaign of resistance of the White Rose, trying to take all the blame in order to exonerate their friend.

On Monday, February 22, the trial started at 10 a.m. in the "Schwurgerichtssaal" (Jury Courtroom) of the Munich "Justizpalast" (Palace of Justice). Roland Freisler, presiding judge of the People's Court who had rushed there from Berlin, had requested a "dignified hall" for the tribunal he was going to preside over. The eyewitness Leo Samberger described Freisler's conduct of the trial as "raging, screaming, yelling to the point of his voice breaking, jumping up explosively again and again, someone who throughout the trial only took the part of prosecutor rather than judge".

The indictment read: "highly treasonous aiding and abetting of the enemy, preparation of high treason and demoralization of the "Wehrkraft" (troops)." The court-appointed defense lawyers did not make a single effort on behalf of their defendants throughout the trial, which lasted three and a half hours. Sophie admitted to the leaflet campaigns and said: "So many people think exactly what we have said and written, but they just don't dare say so."

At 1.30 pm Freisler passed death sentences on Hans and Sophie Scholl and Christoph Probst.

After 5 pm the three friends were decapitated at Munich-Stadelheim prison. "Long live freedom!" shouted Hans Scholl in front of the guillotine.

Second Trial

On April 19, 1943 another trial of the People's Court presided over by Roland Freisler against the White Rose took place at the Munich "Justizpalast". The proceedings began at 9 a.m. and lasted 14 hours.

The Gestapo had found out about the complicity of Alexander Schmorell, Willi Graf and Prof. Kurt Huber in the pamphlet campaign. Besides them, eleven other friends were charged, either with producing and distributing the leaflets – like Hans Hirzel and Franz J. Müller – or with "knowing about the highly treasonable activity without reporting it".

Later that evening Freisler pronounced death sentences on Willi Graf, Prof. Kurt Huber, Alexander Schmorell and Willi Graf. Ten of the remaining defendants were sent to prison, but surprisingly Falk Harnack was acquitted.

Third Trial

On July 13, 1943 the bookseller Josef Söhngen was sentenced to six months in prison by a Special Court in Munich. He had provided a hiding-place in his cellar for the duplication apparatus and the pamphlets. The architect Manfred Eickemeyer, in whose atelier the group had met and produced the propaganda, as well as Harald Dohrn, Christoph Probst's father-in-law and the painter Wilhelm Geyer were acquitted.

Fourth Trial

Willi Bollinger, brother of Heinz Bollinger and lifelong friend of Willi Graf, had distributed the fifth leaflet in Saarbrücken. He had also forged furlough permits and travelling documents for Willi Graf and other members of the Munich group, and he had even hoarded weapons which he had taken from wounded soldiers while working as a medical orderly in an army hospital.

Despite months of interrogation, Willi Graf managed not to reveal Willi Bollinger's involvement to the Gestapo. Thus on April 3, 1944 Wilhelm Bollinger was only sentenced to three months in prison by the "Landgericht" (regional superior court) in Saarbrücken for "failing to report an act of high treason".

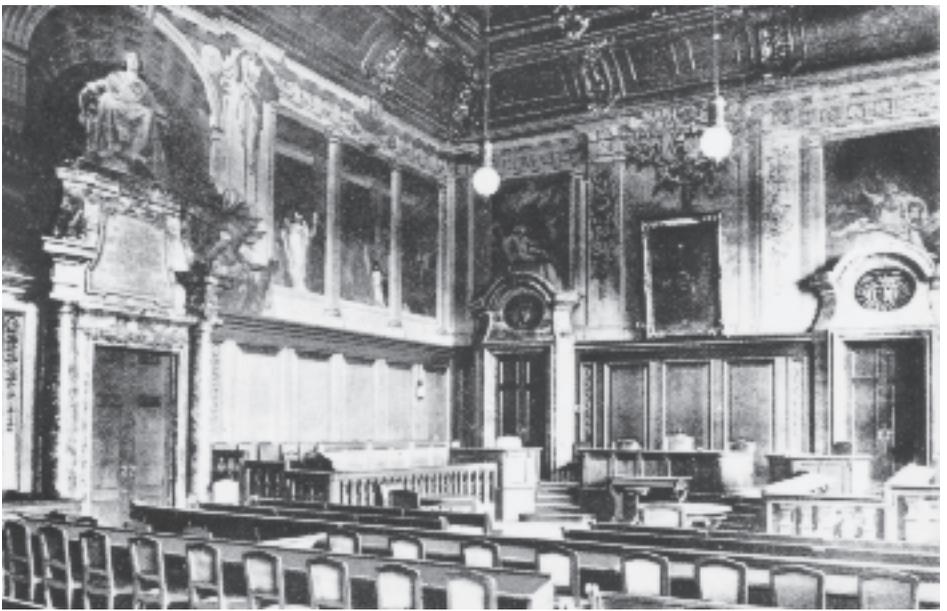


Palace of Justice
in Munich

Roland Freisler,
1942–45 President
of the People's Court



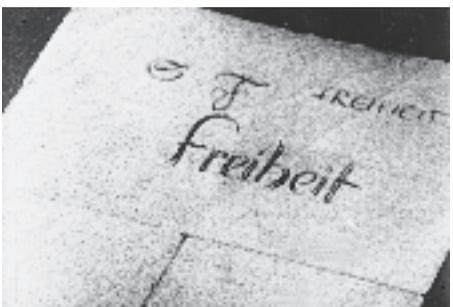
Main room of
the People's Court
in Munich



Cell for prisoners to be
executed in
Munich-Stadelheim



Burned-out Gestapo
prison in Munich



Inscriptions by Sophie
Scholl on the reverse
of her indictment

Fifth Trial

On October 13, 1944 the People's Court in Donauwörth prosecuted chemistry students Hans Leipelt and Marie-Luise Jahn along with five other defendants. Leipelt and Jahn – without having had any contact to the imprisoned and eventually executed members of the White Rose – had received the sixth pamphlet, copied it and distributed it. Furthermore, they had collected money from their fellow students for the destitute widow of the executed Professor Kurt Huber. Hans Leipelt was sentenced to death, Marie-Luise Jahn to a twelve-year term in a maximum-security penitentiary. Three further defendants received prison terms; two were acquitted.

In the late fall of 1943 the Gestapo discovered several resistance groups in Hamburg. Many of their members were students. Typewritten copies of the leaflets of the White Rose circulated among some of the groups. Seven of the persons arrested in this connection were put to death: Frederick Geußenhainer, Elisabeth Lange, Kurt Ledien, Katharina Leipelt, Reinhold Meyer, Margarethe Mrosek and Greta Rothe. They were either driven to suicide, died from illness and exhaustion or were murdered without trial at the end of the war.

Even as late as April 17, April 19, and 20, 1945, the First Division of the People's Court, which had travelled to Hamburg, held trials against members of the "Hamburg branch of the White Rose". The majority of the 19 defendants had already been liberated from prisons in Stendal and Bayreuth. Judgments were passed or proceedings were instituted against Heinz Kucharski, Rudolf Degkwitz jun., Felix Jud, Ilse Ledien and Thorsten Müller, who were still in Hamburg Remand Prison at that point. Heinz Kucharski, who had been sentenced to death, managed to escape on the way to his execution during an air raid.

"Since the case was taken to the People's Court, where arbitrariness rather than the penal code decided our fate, each of us was preparing for the death sentence. Slowly one overcame the fear of death. There was only one thought tormenting us, that of not having done enough against the criminal regime. We had the feeling we had given away our lives too cheaply. On April 19, 1943, at 5 a.m., I was woken up, shaved and taken to the so-called reception cell. A few minutes later Willi Graf joined me. We were both led out into the courtyard. A green prison van was standing there. The door opened and we saw Prof. Huber, Alexander Schmorell and the other defendants, among them the siblings Hans and Susanne Hirzel, Eugen Grimminger, Heinz Bollinger, Franz Müller, Heinrich Guter, Helmut Bauer. We got in and set off across the centre of Munich for the Palace of Justice. Despite the serious, oppressive mood there was a profound harmony among us.

Shortly after 10.30 p.m. we were handcuffed again and led into the big jury courtroom. They began to read out the reasons for the judgments. Alexander Schmorell, Prof. Huber and Willi Graf were condemned to death, Grimminger to 10 years in a penitentiary. That meant he was saved. And now the other defendants followed with longer or shorter prison sentences. Eventually it was my turn and even though the Oberreichsanwalt (Supreme Prosecutor for the Reich) had requested 5 years, I was discharged for lack of evidence. Those friends who had just heard their death sentences were silent and collected, not a single tear, upright posture. Again we were surrounded by the police cordon. From the courtroom we were led downstairs, where the green van was waiting. We got in. After approximately 25 minutes the van stopped, we could hear the gates screeching, the car entered the courtyard of Munich-Stadelheim prison. The door opened and we were led into the large reception hall. A judicial inspector was standing there, holding a list of punishments and assorted us like goods in a department store, each according to his category of punishment. 'Death sentence to the right corner, penitentiary to the left one, prison on the other side.' Then I found myself standing alone in the room. He turned to me and said: 'You go to the corner with the doomed men.' A court attendant stepped in front of us and the ones sentenced to death

started marching. The parting is indescribable. One will never be able to forget this 'Farewell' of the fifteen."
Falk Harnack, 1947

"What will also remain, however, is the image of the man Falk Harnack, who took sides yet still kept his individual position since he was a principled person and at the same time one of independent spirit. An incorruptible who wanted to go through life in an upright and straight way, not bowing in front of anyone nor subduing himself to any prevailing dogmas, whether in the East or in the West. Somebody who was a faithful friend to many and a reliable confederate to all those who desired to save the spirit of that 'other Germany' (which people liked so much to conjure up in Sunday speeches) and install it in the real circumstances of this country."
Gerhard Schoenberner, former director of the memorial site "Haus der Wannseekonferenz",
September 13, 1991

Defendants

First Trial

February 22, 1943, Munich:

Christoph Probst

Hans Scholl

Sophie Scholl

Second Trial

April 19, 1943, Munich:

Helmut Bauer

Heinrich Bollinger

Willi Graf

Eugen Grimminger

Heinrich Guter

Falk Harnack

Hans Hirzel

Susanne Hirzel

Kurt Huber

Traute Lafrenz

Franz Josef Müller

Gisela Schertling

Alexander Schmorell

Katharina Schüddekopf

Third Trial

July 13, 1943, Munich:

Harald Dohrn

Manfred Eickemeyer

Wilhelm Geyer

Josef Söhngen

Fourth Trial

April 3, 1944, Saarbrücken:

Willi Bollinger

Fifth Trial

October 13, 1944, Donauwörth:

Lieselotte Dreyfeldt

Wolfgang Erlenbach

Valentin Freise

Marie-Luise Jahn

Hans Leipelt

Hedwig Schulz

Franz Treppesch

Kurt Huber before the People's Court of Justice on April 19, 1943:

"(...) What I aimed for was waking up students' circles, not through an organization, but through the simple word; not for some act of violence, but for a moral insight into the existing severe damage to political life. A return to clear moral principles, to a constitutional state, mutual trust between human beings; this is not illegal, but on the contrary the restoration of legality. In accordance with Kant's categorical imperative, I asked myself: What would happen if this subjective maxim of my action became a common law? There can be only one answer to this: order, security and trust would return to our State, our political life.

(...) The demand for self-determination of even the smallest part of the nation has been violated in the whole of Europe, no less the demand for protection of the racial and national character. The basic demand for true national community has been destroyed by the systematic undermining of the trust among fellow humans. There is no more terrible judgment on a nation than the admission we must all make that no one feels safe from his neighbor, that even a father does not feel safe from his own sons anymore.

(...) A state which undermines any free expression of opinion and which absolutely defines any morally legitimate criticism, any suggestion for improvement as 'preparation for high treason', punishing it in the most frightful way, is breaking an unwritten German, Germanic law which was still alive and must stay alive in the "sound popular instinct".

(...) I ask and implore you in this hour to administer justice creatively in the true sense of the word for these young defendants, and not let power dictate, but have the clear voice of conscience speak which looks at the ethos behind the deed. And this must have been the most unselfish, ideal ethos that one can ever think of! The quest for absolute justice, cleanness, truthfulness in the life of the state.

(...) We do not want to spend our short lives in chains, be it golden chains of material abundance, like slaves".

Epilogue

The call of the White Rose for passive and active resistance remained unanswered by the Germans.

Despite this, the resistance of the White Rose was not in vain. The leaflets are a draft for the future:

Federal Germany
Federal European organization of states
Free world trade
Reasonable Socialism
Freedom of Speech
Freedom of Religion
Protection of citizens from criminal totalitarian states

The detentions and executions of the members of the White Rose are a bitter lesson for the future: dictatorships can only be averted with the moral courage and resistance of many citizens.

"No one knows how much he must suffer before he is rewarded with a life of freedom. And no science can determine which atonements are necessary for an era to be awarded the grace of a new beginning, which it then lays claim to as a matter of course."

Romano Guardini "The Scales of Existence"
Speech in memory of Sophie and Hans Scholl, Christoph Probst, Alexander Schmorell, Willi Graf and Professor Kurt Huber
Given on November 4, 1945



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White Rose Foundation

Members of the resistance group White Rose founded the Weiße Rose Stiftung e.V. in Munich, in 1987, together with close relatives of the executed.

Aims of the foundation, according to § 2 of the statute, are:

- Portrayal of the White Rose through exhibitions and publications

- Research of sources and traces in archives and contact with witnesses of that era

- Establishment of an information and documentation centre of the White Rose Foundation

- Conversations with students and teachers as well as lectures and discussions with other educational institutions

- Cooperation, particularly with Goethe Institutes, in order to make the White Rose known abroad and to present German history in a more differentiated way

- Cooperation with groups and institutions working against racism and any form of intolerance whatsoever

- It is a non-party association.

The foundation wants to reach, in particular, adolescents and young adults. It wants to maintain the memory of the courageous members of the White Rose who stood up for human rights and moral courage.

At the same time it transposes the question "How was it then?" to the question "What does it mean today?" – considering right-wing radicalism, animosity towards foreigners, social coldness and violence in schools.

It wants to use the thoughts and actions of young people back then, to gain orientation for the youth of today.

Sponsor's Contribution

Friends of the foundation support the work and the project financing with annual contributions of € 65,- (reduced € 35,-) and donations.

The foundation is a registered association and thus it is non-commercial and tax privileged.

Annual contributions and donations are used economically; administration costs are kept as low as possible through the use of honorary staff and assistants.

Dr. Christof Schmid

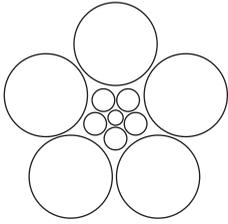
Anneliese Knoop-Graf

Dr. Werner Rechmann

Franz J. Müller, honorary chairman

The Management

Application for Membership



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I want to support the work of the Weiße Rose Stiftung e.V.

My annual contribution € 65,- more or less)

€ (€ 35,- students)

My donation

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(annual)

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The contributions are to be paid using debit entries.

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