

The White Rose: A Commitment

George (Jürgen) Wittenstein

The White Rose

The public perception of the White Rose has undergone a variety of metamorphoses: from the extreme of being branded as treasonous, to glorification in heroic myths. The name itself has been usurped by several organizations. To my knowledge, thirteen books deal with the White Rose, while countless others, as well as newspaper and magazine articles mention it. Unfortunately, none tells the whole story, while some contain misinformation.

It is probably due to Inge Aicher-Scholl and Christian Petry that the White Rose is known at all, for numerous other resistance groups have never entered public awareness and have been lost to history. As a matter of fact, only many years after the war did I learn of three hundred fifty resistance groups within Germany, which I found depicted on a map displayed at a Jewish temple where I happened to lecture. In 1952, Inge Aicher-Scholl, the elder sister of Sophie and Hans Scholl, published the first book entitled *The White Rose*.¹ To honor her siblings, this book features Hans and Sophie prominently; it became very popular and saw several editions. One needs to keep in mind, however, that Inge Aicher-Scholl had had no direct knowledge of the White Rose during her siblings' lifetime, nor about their activities. This is not surprising, for we had compelling reasons not to divulge even a hint about our activities to a single member of our families: *Sippenhaft*. Hitler had copied *Sippenhaft*—invented by the Russian Bolsheviks—as an effective tool to make resistance nearly impossible. Any relative of an “enemy of the state” was automatically arrested and faced serious consequences, and on occasion, death. Thus, Inge Aicher-Scholl had to rely on second-hand information, deduction, or conjecture for her book. Christian Petry published an impressively well-researched and objective book in 1968. It contains details and documentation which still hold true today but have not been accessed frequently enough. Unfortunately, most subsequent books (with two exceptions) lack thorough, independent research and are, to a large extent, re-writes of Inge Aicher-Scholl's book. Even to this date research is not yet complete. While the Gestapo interrogations of my friends in the White

Rose, discovered in Berlin after the fall of "the Wall," are important recent resources for researchers, they must be interpreted judiciously, and a number of facts have to be considered. For example, these "protocols" were rarely verbatim transcriptions of interrogations, but at times only the interrogators' summaries; similarly, statements by my friends cannot necessarily be taken at face value, as they were often intended to mislead the secret police. More data and facts are needed.

Well over fifty years have passed since the end of WW II. During these years important research could have been carried out and a wealth of information gathered, had the many persons been interviewed who were privy to contributory facts and details. By now, the majority of them has died. I find it interesting that fifty-nine years after the demise of the White Rose, the University of Munich is making the effort to publish an historically correct *Gesamtübersicht* (scientific review) of the White Rose and is appealing publicly for persons to identify themselves and bear witness. Unfortunately, few are left to bear witness NOW. I am curious to see the results.

An additional factor should be considered regarding insufficient information: On one hand, we were keenly aware that our activities were highly dangerous. Were any one of us apprehended, one would likely undergo torture—a common practice in Nazi Germany for extracting information. For mutual protection, we therefore made it our practice to selectively withhold information even from each other. That meant that none of us knew everything, none could have given a complete account, and even though I was part of the White Rose from its beginning to its bitter end, I did not know and now do not know everything. This is precisely why diligent, objective research is so urgently needed, which consolidates information from ALL sources. On the other hand, were I to recount everything I do know, it would be quite lengthy. Here, I can touch on only a few selective topics.

The Early Years

Let me begin by setting the stage before addressing my personal experiences. Those who have grown up in a democracy cannot possibly imagine what it means to live in a total dictatorship, where everything is controlled by the government: the press, radio, television (Germany had television in 1939!), all forms of communication, personal correspondence, theatre, literature, education, police, and so on. In addition, it was one's patriotic

duty to spy and report on everyone else. One could not trust anyone and even had to guard against being overheard. Looking over one's shoulder became second nature. I witnessed an illustrative incident in a movie theater: during the newsreel (which always showed Hitler), when the Gestapo suddenly arrived and arrested a man two rows ahead of me. He had probably made a derogatory remark about Hitler which was overheard by someone who instantly reported him. Even in our homes, we put tea cozies or pillows over the telephone, as one never knew whether one's telephone was tapped. Mail was vulnerable to being secretly opened. In other words, there simply was no way of communicating safely. This can explain why there was apparently no resistance movement that extended throughout Germany. As mentioned earlier, I learned long after the war of numerous other resistance groups; we in the White Rose, however, did not know that and felt very alone and isolated—as I am sure other such groups felt as well. We knew only of *Die Rote Kapelle* (The Red Orchestra)² and of Carl Gördele³ with whom we had just begun to make contact.

I myself was active in another resistance group, the *Freiheitsaktion Bayern* (Bavarian Freedom Action). My association with that group had come about NOT because one could find out about a resistance group and "join," but rather via personal contact and friendship. How secretive we had to be is further evidenced by the fact that I did not even tell my friends in the White Rose about this, although I would have, once it became appropriate.

I am often asked, "How (or when) did you join the White Rose?" Well, nobody ever "joined." The White Rose was not an "organization." We simply were a group of close-knit friends who shared varied interests such as art, music, theater, literature, philosophy, nature, hiking, skiing, and so on. We also shared and were committed to similar ideals, among them integrity, personal responsibility and "social conscience"—as some might call it; in short, our actions were the logical consequence of a shared *Weltanschauung* and *Lebensauffassung* (loosely translated as "philosophy of life"); this world view reflected how we perceived our responsibility as humans and world citizens. Each of us had been imprinted with the ideals of the *Bündische Jugend*, an important youth movement in Europe.⁴ The *Bündische Jugend* had more members in Germany than in any other country, as there were around fifty different organizations under its umbrella: some were religious or denominational (Jewish, Lutheran, Catholic, etc.), while others were political, and still others, sports-oriented, etc. Also common to our circle of friends were our middle class family

and social backgrounds. Our parents were anti-Nazi. Those of us in the core group were medical students who had completed our compulsory labor and military service. In time, we came to the same distressing conclusions about our government.

I date the beginning of what later became known as the White Rose to 1938. Having planned the war long before 1939, the German Army realized in 1938, that they would need additional physicians. Therefore, those who wanted to enter medicine, were transferred during the last six months of compulsory military service to a *Sanitätsabteilung*, a military hospital where they were trained in basic primary care. It was during this training that I shared a room with three or four other students, among them Alexander Schmorell. Alex and I soon discovered our mutual cultural and intellectual interests and basic beliefs. We became close friends and, in due course, trusted each other to the point where we shared our political leanings and abhorrence of Hitler and the Nazis. Those of you who have read about the White Rose may have come across Alex's often-quoted remark to me "Maybe one day on this door (of our dormitory room) will hang a plaque: 'From here the movement progressed.'" (We were about 19 then.)



Fig. 24. Alex Schmorell in the lecture hall.
(George [Jürgen] Wittenstein)

I entered Medical School in the summer of 1939 at the University of

Munich, where I befriended Hellmut Hartert and his best friend, Hans Scholl. The two often spent weekends at the Hartert family's second home in Bad Tölz, a small city south of Munich, which they used as a base for mountain climbing and hiking in the nearby Bavarian and Austrian Alps. I introduced Alex to them, who in turn brought along his high-school friend, Christoph Probst. This made us a group of five friends—Alex, Hellmut, Christoph, Hans, and I—which one might call the "core" of what later became the White Rose.

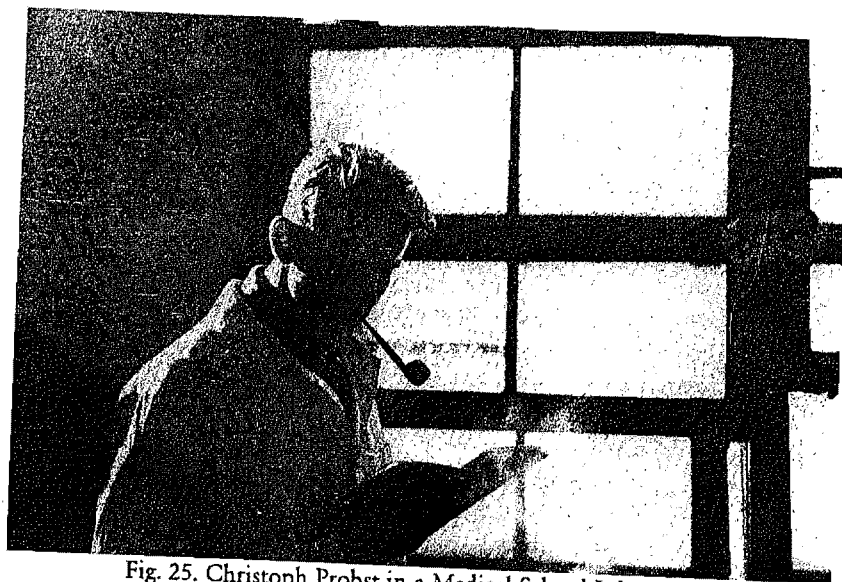


Fig. 25. Christoph Probst in a Medical School Laboratory.
(George [Jürgen] Wittenstein)

Our first semester was near magical. For the first time in years, we were civilians at last! After all, immediately after graduating from high school we had been subjected to seven months of *Reichsarbeitsdienst* ("RAD"), a compulsory paramilitary labor service with mandatory political indoctrination and brain-washing. This had been followed by two years of military service. Now we experienced a degree of freedom we had not known for so long. We took the ever-present restrictions in stride and savored every moment of this incredible liberty: freedom to live, to finally be young! All that seemed to matter was that we were able to study at a university, partake of the abundant cultural events Munich had to offer, enjoy nature, take little trips to wherever our fancy would lead us: to

mountains, lakes, meadows, forests...! Unfortunately, our freedom was short-lived. As you know, in September 1939, Hitler started World War II and in the summer of 1940 we were drafted into the Army once again, assigned to different units and locations. I was posted to Prague, Czechoslovakia.

By fall 1940, we were permitted to resume our studies, for Germany needed doctors. As in the United States, medical students were drafted and housed in barracks. We marched in columns to our lectures in the morning and back to the barracks in the evening, until the authorities realized that this was impractical. We were then permitted to room in the city, but required to report to the barracks each Saturday for roll call. Often, several of us would not show up, and we had made it a habit that those present would respond for those missing.

German universities had always been state institutions, for private universities were unknown. Therefore, faculty members were civil servants whose careers were determined by the government, and depended to a large degree on political allegiance. Under German law, there was no separation of church and state. In predominantly Catholic Bavaria, the Catholic Church had the right to appoint an academic chair which, at that time, was held by Professor Fritz-Joachim von Rintelen. I mention this, because, in addition to our lectures at the medical school, we also attended lectures by philosophers, art historians, artists, and others at the University proper across town. Professor von Rintelen's lectures were sought out by us, because it was obvious that he did not align himself with National Socialist thinking. Equally extraordinary were lectures by Professor Kurt Huber about whom I will say more later. In June 1941, Professor von Rintelen did not show up for his scheduled lecture. Rumors spread immediately, for it was quite possible that he had been dismissed. If he were sick, it would have been so posted. When von Rintelen again did not appear the following week, a painter friend of mine, Remigius Netzer, and I suggested to our "class" of around fifty or sixty students to demand information from the president—unthinkable in those days. After we noisily persisted, he shouted through a slit in his door, "I refuse any information," and slammed it shut. At that, Remigius and I proposed a sympathy demonstration in support of Professor von Rintelen, and our whole group marched along the Ludwigstrasse and Leopoldstrasse, Munich's broadest avenue, to von Rintelen's apartment. Pedestrians stopped in amazement: a protest by such a large group of young Germans—many in uniform—was unthinkable during Hitler's dictatorship, particularly in the middle of an

ongoing war. A year later, the White Rose participants launched their first leaflet.

The Leaflets

While the activities and conversations among us had originally centered around our cultural and intellectual interests, in time politics and the inescapable oppression by our government, its crimes and atrocities, entered our discussions, and we struggled with our ethical responsibilities as citizens and human beings versus our loyalty to our "Fatherland."

In the summer of 1942, I received an anonymous leaflet in the mail, entitled "*Flugblätter der Weissen Rose*" (Leaflets of the White Rose) which was highly critical of Hitler and the government. It was obvious to me (as it was to another friend of ours, Hubert Furtwängler, who had also received one), that it could have only been penned by Alex or Hans, for it incorporated language and philosophical thoughts they had frequently used in our discussions. When I confronted Hans, he readily admitted to it. Between June and July 1942, a total of four leaflets were written by Alex and Hans in quick succession, of which I edited the third and fourth at their request. Some of the leaflets, addressed to students, professors, and other intellectuals were mailed, while others were placed in telephone booths.

At about that time, Hans' younger sister Sophie, a biology student who roomed with him, discovered that Hans was one of the originators of the leaflets and asked to participate. In order to protect her, he initially refused. When he eventually relented, she became an important participant.

To write, print, and distribute leaflets was difficult and dangerous. For one, any opposition to the party line was treasonous and severely punished. But it was even difficult and dangerous to obtain supplies. Not only was food rationed, but nearly all items of daily living, including writing material. Even purchasing more than a few stamps or sheets of paper roused suspicion, which is well illustrated in Michael Verhoeven's film *The White Rose*.⁵ Everything had to be obtained discreetly, in small quantities, preferably at different locations. Copying machines had not yet been invented and hand-cranked mimeograph machines made printing of even a few copies laborious and time-consuming.

One also never knew whether mail was secretly opened, for if so, it could endanger the recipient. In fact, in order to check whether leaflets

were intercepted by the Gestapo, some were mailed to ourselves. Most telling is the fact that about 60 percent of the recipients turned the leaflets in to the Gestapo. This does not necessarily mean that they were Nazis. However, the content of the leaflets was so dangerous that some recipients rightfully feared that the Gestapo could have sent them in order to test the recipient's "political reliability." This could mean that one was already under suspicion and failure to turn such inflammatory material over to the authorities would doom the recipient.

We therefore had to devise an alternative distribution system. It was our aim to not only distribute leaflets, but to form cells at as many universities as possible. Such groups, in turn, were to reproduce our, and perhaps their own, leaflets and start the resistance movement at their university. As receiving leaflets by mail could endanger the recipient, the only option was to hand-carry them. However, that, too, was dangerous, for the only available mode of transportation was trains, for private cars had been confiscated for the war in 1939. Trains were constantly patrolled by civilian and military police, who repeatedly checked papers and at times searched persons and luggage. As all males between the ages of 16 and 60 were conscripted, they could travel only on official military orders, unless they carried a rare exemption document on their person. Otherwise they were considered AWOL and subject to immediate arrest. For that reason, most leaflets were brought to other cities by females. Of the six leaflets produced, I took five to Berlin, where Hellmut Hartert was to start a group at that university.

We saw it as our responsibility to inform the German people of Hitler's true aims and actions (which were never officially mentioned on radio or in newspapers), to rouse their conscience—hopefully to action. While Germans had known about concentration camps since 1934, (a standard saying was, "Don't say that or you'll end up in Dachau") the general population did not know about the murder of the mentally ill, until Bishop von Galen's famous sermon was clandestinely circulated widely throughout Germany in 1941.⁶ My friends in the White Rose had learned about these murders much earlier from me, as the father of my closest friend was the administrator of an insane asylum, whose inmates were deported from his care for extermination. The general population also did not know of the slaughter of prisoners of war, Jews, Gypsies, or other groups. We learned about these atrocities via connections we had established, and from friends at the front, like Sophie's fiancé Fritz Hartnagel. We felt Germans HAD to know.⁷

Our Russian Front Experience and Its Consequences

In 1942, the government was faced with the fact that thousands of medical student soldiers were "wasting" three precious summer months vacationing, while they could have served Hitler. (Eventually the curriculum was changed from semesters to trimesters in order to graduate more physicians for the war sooner.) Therefore, the government cancelled our summer vacation and sent us to the Russian front for *Frontbewährung*—to prove yourself under fire—a typical Nazi concept. In other Western countries physicians served as officers, their ranks determined by experience and specialization; not so in Germany. Early in the war, physicians were drafted as privates, rifle in hand. Only after too many were killed did the government recognize this as an uneconomical investment of valuable resources and hence drafted physicians as officer's, albeit at the lowest rank. (Thus it was not uncommon in military operating rooms that a famous professor—with the lowly rank of lieutenant—performed surgery, while his assistant, a career medical officer, far outranked him.)

For some time now, our circle of friends included a few others, among them Hubert Furtwängler (later also Wolfgang Jaeger). They knew of our activities and we trusted them explicitly, but they did not actively participate. On our way to Russia, one more student soldier joined our group, Willi Graf. Willi had not been as fortunate as the rest of us to have been released to study medicine, but rather had served in the Army continuously until then (summer 1942). Having lived through and witnessed horrifying experiences, he was the most serious and most mature of us.⁸ The only one of the friends not with us in Russia was Christoph Probst, because he served in the Air Force and had been transferred to the University of Innsbruck, a hundred miles away. But, as can be seen in my photographs of our departure from Munich, he and Sophie saw us off at the railway station (fig. 32, page 216 in this volume).

Russia itself was a deeply moving experience. Not only did we already know well and love its literature and music, but we also learned to love the countryside: its endless sky, its rich earth, its graceful birch trees and its people. As Alex was half-Russian and spoke Russian fluently, we had the exceptional opportunity to get to know Russian people, learn what they were like, communicate with them, and see the suffering Hitler and Stalin brought upon them.⁹

We also witnessed German atrocities. The trip by rail from Munich to the front had taken almost three weeks, as ammunition and major troop

transports were given priority. We had spent three days in Warsaw, where I visited the ghetto. Although not permitted to enter, I took pictures. Ghetto inhabitants were then still allowed to work "on the outside." Returning from work with burlap bags on their backs filled with whatever food they had been able to obtain, they were thoroughly searched at the gates and frequently mistreated. I have pictures of an SS officer kicking and whipping them with a horsewhip. The ghetto was guarded by Ukrainian soldiers. Ukrainians were on good terms with Germany, for they hoped that Hitler would liberate them from their arch enemy, Stalin; and many Ukrainians served in the German Army. For a pack of cigarettes these Ukrainian guards offered to shoot a Jew whom you pointed out—for example a person who happened to look out a window. On another occasion—I realized this only after the fact—I had been near a mass execution in progress: I had seen trucks full of people disappear into a forest, heard rifle shots, and saw the trucks return empty.



Fig. 26. Last meal together in Ghatsk before dispersal to front units. Left to right: H. Furtwaengler, H. Scholl, W. Graf, A. Schmorell, J. Wittenstein (not pictured), Unknown. (George [Jürgen] Wittenstein)

During our service at the Russian front I was separated from the others for a while because I was transferred to the Division hospital. We all returned to Munich in the fall of 1942. When Hans and Alex resumed their work on the leaflets, we had long discussions. What we had seen and experienced had changed us profoundly, and I felt strongly that the previous language and content of the leaflets were no longer appropriate. The

earlier leaflets had been full of philosophical and literary quotes and allusions to Goethe, Lao-tzu, Hölderlin, Novalis, and many philosophers. They were meaningful to the educated elite, but had little relevance for the majority of the population, whom I felt we now had to address. Even more importantly, although active resistance had been mentioned previously, we now had to call for a wider range of active resistance.



Fig. 27. Hans Scholl and Alexander Schmorell on the train to Russia. (George [Jürgen] Wittenstein)

Additional Critical Events: Professor Huber Joins

On 14 January 1943, the Nazi-appointed Gauleiter of Bavaria called a mandatory meeting of all university students.¹⁰ This meeting was held in Munich's largest hall at the famous German Museum. The Gauleiter castigated the students for wasting the nation's precious resources by attending the university and went on to chastise female students. It was their patriotic duty to produce children for their Führer, offering those women not pretty enough to attract a man his Aryan officers as "studs." When the female students rose in protest and tried to leave, they were arrested. Thereupon, a large group of male students—many in uniform—stormed the podium and held hostage the head of the official student union (*NS Studentenbund*), a Nazi, until the female students were released. The stu-

dents were so upset that they continued their protest in the streets. Within a short time police arrived to make arrests. As fleeing students tried to hide, some knocked on doors, but no one let them in.

In February 1943, the end came to Stalingrad: On Hitler's orders, the entire 6th Army was subjected to horrendous suffering; around 200,000 young Germans died needlessly, and approximately 91,000 were taken prisoner—all sacrificed for their "Führer." In the opinion of many, this was the final turning point of the war. For the first time the majority of Germans realized that Germany would lose the war.

I mentioned Professor Huber earlier. Germany's most respected expert on folk music, he lectured equally superbly on philosophy and psychology, and was revered by students from all disciplines. He was my Ph.D. sponsor in psychology, and my friends and I made every effort not to miss a single one of his lectures which were always crowded. I remember in particular a lecture on the philosopher Baruch Spinoza. As a Jew, Spinoza was taboo and not allowed to be taught. But Professor Huber managed his lecture so brilliantly, that it became evident that this "depressed Jew" was one of Germany's most important philosophers.

In the fall of 1942, our activities and plans had been broached to Professor Huber who strongly influenced the fifth leaflet by pointing out to Hans (as I had, too) that its tone had to change. This leaflet calls for a complete break with the National Socialist Regime, envisioning a federalist state as opposed to a central government. As you read it carefully, you will notice how fundamentally different it is from the preceding ones; even its title is changed from "Leaflets of the White Rose" to "Leaflets of the German Resistance."

This fifth leaflet had the largest edition (between six and nine thousand) and was distributed all over Germany. Interestingly, neither Hans nor Alex received the ones mailed to themselves as tests for possible interception by the secret police, which was an ominous sign. This fact, and the fall of Stalingrad became the stimulus for more audacious actions. During the nights of 4, 8, and 15 February, graffiti were painted with tar and red paint, some via stencils, on walls along the Ludwigstrasse, and elsewhere: "Down with Hitler!" "Hitler mass murderer!" "Freedom!" as well as crossed out swastikas. This was an extremely risky undertaking, considering the ever-present police patrols. I wrote similar slogans in the restrooms of the university.

The Final Act and Its Aftermath

The unconscionable and unjustifiable sacrifice of those thousands of young German men at Stalingrad was the stimulus for Professor Huber to compose a sixth leaflet at the request of Hans. Contrary to what you may have read, this leaflet is now known to have been written entirely by Kurt Huber. (One sentence was deleted by Hans.)

The following events have been reconstructed: While we had always discussed all activities and plans among ourselves, and our actions were usually carried out by consensus, on 18 February 1943, Hans and Sophie—without telling any of the others—carried these leaflets in a suitcase to the University of Munich. The so-called "academic hour" always began punctually fifteen minutes after the hour and lasted exactly forty-five minutes. No one entered or left lecture halls, except at those times. Thus, Hans and Sophie had forty-five minutes to place a stack of leaflets outside each classroom door and elsewhere; then they left the building. Once outside, they apparently realized that some leaflets were still left. They returned and ascended the stairs to the top floor of the inner courtyard where Sophie emptied the suitcase over the balustrade, letting the leaflets flutter to the lowest floor. The head janitor observed, arrested and delivered them to the office of the president who called the Gestapo.

I learned later that, on his way to class by streetcar, Alex happened to hear of an arrest at the university. Realizing that—whatever had happened—he was in mortal danger himself, he immediately went into hiding.

The rest of us knew nothing of the arrests. When, on 19 February we were unexpectedly ordered to report to the barracks forthwith, rumors spread that we were being shipped back to the Russian front. Only when the commander informed us that two students—one a member of our company—had been arrested for high treason at the university, and that we were not permitted to leave the barracks until further notice, did we begin to comprehend the situation. It was clear to me that the arrested were Hans and Sophie.

Among those not accounted for was Alex, and I was very concerned. I managed to convince our commander that Alex probably had not received the order to immediately report to the barracks because he lived in the country to escape the constant air-raids; (I knew full well that he actually lived with his parents in Munich) and, as he had no phone, he could not be notified. Under this ruse, I was given permission to leave the barracks and cycled straight to his father's medical office where a Gestapo agent

already was posted in the waiting room. I wanted to make sure that—should Alex somehow make contact with his family—he would be reminded of our agreement that my family would hide him on our country estate and perhaps smuggle him into Switzerland.

During Hans' arrest, a draft for a leaflet penned by Christoph Probst had been found in his pocket which Hans was unable to completely destroy. From the handwriting, the secret police identified Christl which led to his arrest in Innsbruck within hours. Of all people, Christl, whom we had always tried to protect!

Wanted posters offering a high reward for the apprehension of the fourth traitor, Alexander Schmorell, were placed throughout Germany. Only much later did I learn that he had tried to escape to Switzerland, but had to turn back because of deep snow. Hiding with a friend in Munich, he was arrested because he made the mistake of going to a bomb shelter during an air-raid, where a former girlfriend recognized him and called police. Within a few days, Willi Graf and over 80 people were arrested throughout Germany, which, according to *Sippenhaft*, included families of the "traitors" (such as the entire Scholl family, who, like many others, were jailed as well).

So serious did the government take this threat, so great their fear of these youths, that they did not announce the arrests, nor that the People's Court whose permanent seat was in Berlin, would be rushed to Munich.¹¹ The People's Court's presiding "judge" was the ruthless Roland Freisler, who functioned simultaneously as prosecutor, judge and jury. He was feared throughout Germany for his screaming, viciousness and for routinely meting out death-sentences by the hundreds.

In the evening of 21 February, I happened to learn that a People's Court trial was set for the next day. It was obvious to me that my friends would be sentenced to death. Because there had been no official mention of the trial, I was also sure that the parents Scholl—whom I had never met—would not see their children alive, unless they made it to the trial. I called them at their home in Ulm, urging them to take the first morning train to Munich. I met them at the railroad station and guided them to the Palace of Justice, where the trial was already in progress. On the way, I hurriedly summarized the events for them, for they only knew of their children's arrest, but not why. (You can imagine that calling, meeting and guiding them to the Palace of Justice was dangerous, for I had to assume that their telephone was tapped, and that Gestapo agents would shadow them.)

Hitler's reaction was swift and brutal. So great was the government's haste to erase this danger to the regime, that the trial in which the Scholl siblings and Christoph Probst were sentenced to death was short. They were executed by guillotine within hours. News of the "incident" were not released until after the executions. Only then was it briefly announced that three individuals had been executed for high treason, and the population was urged to assist in apprehending the fourth traitor, Alexander Schmorell.

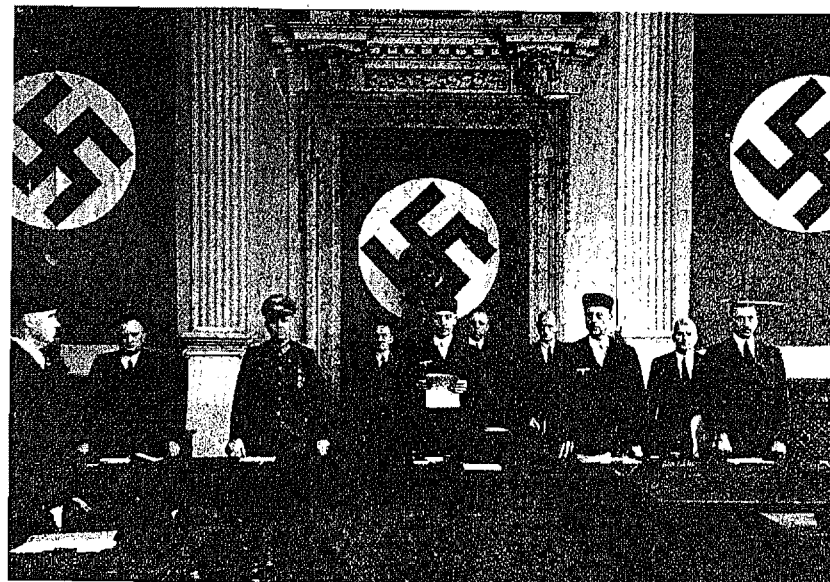


Fig. 28. Roland Freisler, President of the People's court, sentences the 20 July 1944 conspirators. (Rijkstinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie)

During a second trial on 19 March 1943, Alexander Schmorell, Willi Graf, and Professor Kurt Huber were sentenced to death. All appeals were in vain. Alex and Professor Huber were executed on 13 July 1944, Willi Graf on 12 October. Kurt Huber had completed his major opus on Leibniz during his incarceration. To illustrate how Professor Huber saw his actions, let me try to translate an excerpt from a poem he wrote from prison to his four-year-old son, explaining that his father did not die a traitor:

"...I died for Germany's FREEDOM, for TRUTH and HONOR.
Faithfully I served these three until my very last heartbeat..."

The brutality of the Nazi regime is illustrated by the bill for 600 Marks which was presented to Mrs. Huber for "wear of the guillotine." When she mentioned that she could not possibly come up with such a sum for she no longer had any income, the official replied: "Maybe we can give you a discount; after all, we have so many executions these days....." Professor Huber's summa cum laude Ph.D. degree was nullified, and his university appointment revoked (similar to Thomas Mann's in 1933, and many others).

There were arrests of other groups, loosely connected to the White Rose. A third trial of the People's Court followed in which several more death sentences were pronounced.¹²

Regrets and Troubling Questions

I have few regrets, but many troubling questions: Most troubling is that Christl Probst would likely have survived were it not for his leaflet draft in Hans' pocket. This is the most tragic consequence of the final leaflet action. Of all people, it had been Christl, whom we had always tried to protect because he was married (very rare for students then) and a father! Yes, he would have been interrogated as one of the friends, but dismissed for lack of evidence, as he had not been directly involved in our activities after he had been transferred to Innsbruck. When he was executed, his wife had just given birth to their third child and was seriously ill.

Another troubling question is why none of my friends fled to my family's country estate near Stuttgart. All knew our long-standing agreement and plans. They knew that my family had the possibility to hide people at Beilstein, for my mother had already done so. We even had a way to smuggle them to Switzerland. Healthy and athletic, Hans and Sophie, as well as Alex, could have easily made it there by bicycle in a single night (they were used to riding their bicycles in winter). The roads were easily negotiable—unlike the mountains that prevented Alex from reaching Switzerland on foot because of deep snow. Why didn't they? Why did Hans, athletic as he was, let the janitor who had no weapon, arrest him and Sophie like sheep? Their deaths could have been prevented, but were not—and I will never know why. (Christl, Willi, or Professor Huber did not have this option to flee and hide.)

My Survival and the Eventual Addressing of the White Rose History

I am often asked how I happened to survive. I have asked that question myself time and again. For one, in my own case, the Gestapo—at least in

Munich—was rather inefficient. For example, I went to Hans' and Sophie's apartment after the Gestapo had searched it—naturally with great trepidation because I expected it to be guarded—but it was not. I was thus able to remove everything that could possibly implicate me. I was not the only one to enter the traitors' apartment unapprehended; Sophie's sister Elisabeth had found Sophie's diary after the Gestapo had completed their search and confiscations of suspected material.

I was interrogated by the Gestapo and faced a military court martial. Once I was accused of offering a Jewish woman refuge and to smuggle her out of Germany—she had asked me for help when her son, Hans Leipelt, was about to be executed. At that time, I was able to deny this accusation and mislead them. But eventually, time was running out for me. When I learned via my connections to the *Freiheitsaktion Bayern*, that the Gestapo had accumulated additional evidence against me, I realized that I might not have another chance. Unable to flee Germany because of *Sippenhaft*, my only possibility to escape the Gestapo was to request transfer to the front—something for which one usually did not volunteer. The front was the only place where the Gestapo did not have jurisdiction, the only "safe" place for me. I spent the rest of the war at the Italian front, where I was wounded.

Only after the war did I discover other reasons for my survival: For example, I learned from my company commander (I still have some of his letters) that the Gestapo had suspected me from the very beginning and continued surveillance and investigations until the end of the war. They interrogated him about me repeatedly. Although he himself had been sure that I had been part of the White Rose, because my close friendship with the ones arrested and executed was too obvious, he denied it vehemently. Then, he took it upon himself to deliberately mislead the Gestapo. To this day, I am not sure what his reasons or motivations were; were they humanitarian, was he himself against Hitler, or was this officer simply so enraged that the authority of the military was subjugated to the whims of the party? The Gestapo had certainly interfered with the authority of the military by illegally arresting, trying, and executing his men. In fact, he once said to me: "I authorize you to make use of your weapon, should the Gestapo try to arrest you." This, of course, would have been senseless, and I have often wondered how circumspect he himself had been. To use my weapon against the Gestapo would have been tantamount to suicide. Whatever his reason, I was apparently protected to a degree while under his command and may well owe my life to him during that time.



Fig. 29. George (Jürgen) Wittenstein on the train to Russia.
(George [Jürgen] Wittenstein)

I am often asked why I have hardly spoken about my experiences in the White Rose. After the war, in 1947, I was invited to lecture at British universities. The Institut für Zeitgeschichte (Institute for Contemporary History) in Munich requested a report from me. As I no longer lived in Germany then, I had to submit this report without having access for its preparation to documents, not even to my own diary. For the next forty years or so, I hardly spoke about those years, but neither did anyone ask. Years later, during visits to Mrs. Huber and the families of my dead friends, I learned that they were disturbed about the unbalanced depiction of the White Rose as synonymous with Hans and Sophie Scholl. Their loved ones had participated equally, had also sacrificed their lives for their convictions, but were either omitted or relegated to the sidelines. (For example, many years passed before schools were named for persons other than the Scholl siblings. Another example is the now “famous” photograph of the White Rose which I took as we departed for the Russian front: it is used for the majority of publications on the White Rose, in books as well as newspapers. To this day often, only Hans and Sophie are depicted, while Christoph Probst is cut away.) It was then that I decided to do whatever I could to see those dead friends honored in a manner they

deserve. I have not been successful.

The Relevance of the White Rose Today

Much to my surprise, there is worldwide interest in the White Rose. An opera has been composed, two films made, many books and an excellent play written. However, the play’s New York production—which followed its world premiere at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego—was cancelled three days later; critics stated that too much had been said about “good Germans” already, and there was no need to hear any more. Publishers of school text books and other publications, as well as producers of documentaries from the United States, Canada, Australia, Holland, Italy and other countries have requested my photographs; I have been contacted and interviewed by historians and individuals as young as fourteen years of age, who have written moving reports.

Such interest seems to reflect a relevance, and I am often asked whether there is a message. That depends to a large degree on the one asking the question, the one who immerses himself or herself in the “story.”

For the “story” of the White Rose is not just a story of action. Their actions were simply the logical consequence of their beliefs, their own way of life, their perception of responsibility, and as I said earlier, their shared *Weltanschauung* and *Lebensauffassung*. Personal responsibility is a way of life, not a sudden conflagration of action. It does not arise out of a vacuum, but is built on ethical principles which are the basis of each of our national cultures—of humanity itself.

I would like to close with a verse by the German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte with which Professor Huber concluded his defense statement, for it reflects the philosophy of the White Rose as well as my own.

*“Und handeln sollst du so als hinge
Von dir und deinem Tun allein
Das Schicksal ab der deutschen Dinge,
Und die Verantwortung wär dein”*

“And you shall act as though
all things German depended
solely upon you and upon your actions,
and as though the responsibility were yours—and yours alone.”

Notes

1. Christian Petry, *Studenten aufs Schafott. Die Weisse Rose und ihr Scheitern* (München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1968). Inge Scholl, *The White Rose* (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1983).
2. See (in this volume) Ina Friedman, "The Red Orchestra and Cato Bontjes Van Beek."
3. Gördeleler had been designated by his co-conspirators in the military to fill the position of chancellor after the war. Their later attempt to assassinate Hitler on 20 July 1944, failed and all were executed.
4. The *Bündische Jugend* had been founded at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century in an attempt by young people to distance themselves from indoctrination and domination by schools, parents, and governments in order to allow them to live according to their own high ethical ideals.
5. *The White Rose* (1982), Dir. Michael Verhoeven.
6. Bishop von Galen's vehement protest of the Reich's euthanasia program helped put a stop to the mercy killing of "the unfit." See Costa-Gavras' film *Amen* (2002) in which this protest is dramatized.
7. I have been told that the White Rose was the only resistance group in Germany which called attention to the extermination of Jews; and which, other than the Kreisau Circle and some military members of the July 1944 conspiracy plot, proposed concrete plans for a post-war Germany, its political system, its moral and ethical responsibilities, its role within Europe and the civilized world. See in this volume, Rachel Freudenburg, et al, "You See It Too Simply.' Freya von Moltke Looks Back on the Kreisau Circle."
8. See his letters and diaries, published by his sister.
9. Alex's German father had been a physician in the Ural region; his Russian mother had tragically died young. The father had remarried and the family had fled to Germany in 1921, after the Russian Revolution, bringing along Alex's Russian nanny who brought him up in the Orthodox faith.
10. A "Gauleiter" was a Hitler-appointed Nazi official who filled the former post of governor. The moment Hitler came to power he destroyed the German federation. Until then states had been independent; Hitler dissolved their parliaments, re-named states "Gau" and replaced governors with "Gauleiters."
11. The People's Court, created by Hitler in 1934, was another institution outside the German constitution. It served the sole purpose of eliminating Hitler's enemies. Already then, Hitler had ordered about 40 guillotines to be built by prison inmates.
12. See in this volume Peter Hoffmann's "The German Resistance and the Holocaust," especially footnote 45, for members of the White Rose.

The White Rose Student Movement in Germany: Its History and Relevance Today¹

John J. Michalczyk and Franz Josef Müller of the White Rose

On 22 February 1943, the People's Court of the National Socialist government sentenced to death and guillotined three university students—Hans Scholl, 24, Sophie Scholl, 21, and Christoph Probst, 23—nominally for high treason, but really for their passionate belief in a world free of Hitler, the Gestapo, the SS, and the SA, the true betrayers of the German people. On 19 April, three more resisters—Professor Kurt Huber, Alexander Schmorell, and Willi Graf—received death sentences. Others, among them Franz Josef Müller and Hans Hirzel, ironically considered "immature boys misled by the enemies of the state," were given lighter sentences. Six later cases saw more arrested, detained, imprisoned, or executed.

An oppressive totalitarian government snuffed out the lives of these young resisters, but their idealistic and heroic spirit and profound courageous vision survive. In a brutal David vs. Goliath battle, the consciences of the resisters obliged them to take a stand and speak out against the government and its imperialistic war effort, especially in eastern Europe.

In 1942, near the end of the third year of the war, the White Rose participants at the University of Munich began to develop gradually their resistance activity. Their clandestine leaflets, their addresses, their bold graffiti such as "Down with Hitler" or "Freedom," placed them in jeopardy, for these were perceived as deliberate attempts to sabotage the National Socialist government in time of war.

The strong language in the first of six leaflets indicates that the participants of the movement were risk takers threatening the stability of the government. They sounded a provocative bugle call to awaken a nation brainwashed by a decade of Nazi propaganda:

If everyone waits until the other man makes a start, the messengers of avenging Nemesis will come steadily closer; then even the last victim will have been cast senselessly into the maw of the insatiable demon. Therefore every individual, conscious of his responsibility as a member of Christian and

Western civilization, must defend himself as best he can at this late hour, he must work against the scourges of mankind, against fascism and any similar system of totalitarianism. Offer passive resistance—resistance—wherever you may be, forestall the spread of this atheistic war machine before it is too late.²

This call to resistance set the political tone for the six leaflets that were created and distributed by the White Rose network. The four leaflets produced during the summer of 1942 and the two drafted in January and February 1943 were designed to emphasize the dignity and free will of Germans and all peoples and to challenge the oppressive government that was curtailing these. Utilizing a rhetorical form of personal address, Hans Scholl and his colleagues hoped to stir the hearts of the Germans to challenge the regime. To support their beliefs, they invoked the Greek philosophers, such as Aristotle, classic German writers such as Schiller, Goethe, and Novalis, the book of Ecclesiastes, and the Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu.

The first leaflet underlines the role of the state in the progress of humanity, quoting Schiller: "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 none other than the development of all of man's powers, his progress and improvement."³

The second leaflet emphasized the urgency of struggling against the National Socialist philosophy and system. Enlightening the apathetic Germans about the Nazi horrors against humanity shortly after the launching of the Final Solution in January 1942 at Wannsee—especially the Holocaust—the White Rose resisters proclaimed it their duty and that of the German people to shake off the system of terror.

The third leaflet clearly defined the blueprint of the White Rose resistance. It not only reproached Germans for accepting the brutality of the Nazi government; it created very precise guidelines for engaging in "passive resistance." The suggestions range from boycotting collection drives to conducting sabotage in the munitions plants, thereby obstructing the proper functioning of a vicious war machine.

In the fourth leaflet, the participants, considering themselves to be the bad conscience of the Germans, stirred them to struggle against the Nazis. Like Socratic gadflies, they provoked the Germans

to rethink their political views and their acceptance of the destructive regime. Their long-range goal was to achieve a rebirth or renewal within the hearts of Germans.

Flugblätter der Weissen Rose

II

Man kann sich mit dem Nationalsozialismus geistig nicht auseinandersetzen, weil er ungeistig ist. Es ist falsch, wenn man von einer nationalsozialistischen Weltanschauung spricht, denn, wenn es diese gäbe, müsste man versuchen, sie mit geistigen Mitteln zu beweisen oder zu bekämpfen - die Wirklichkeit aber bietet uns ein völlig anderes Bild: schon in ihrem ersten Keim war diese Bewegung auf den Betrug des Mitmenschen angewiesen, schon damals war sie im Innersten verfault und konnte sich nur durch die stete Lüge retten. Schreibt doch Hitler selbst in einer frühen Auflage "eines" Buches (ein Buch, das in dem Übelsten Deutsch geschrieben worden ist, das ich je gelesen habe; dennoch ist es von dem Volke der Dichter und Denker zur Bibel erhoben worden): "Man glaubt nicht, wie man ein Volk betrügen muss, um es zu regieren." Wenn sich nun am Anfang dieses Krebsgeschwürs des Deutschen Volkes noch nicht allzusehr bemerkbar gemacht hatte, so nur deshalb, weil noch gute Kräfte genug am Werk waren, es zurückzuhalten. Wie es aber grösser und grösser wurde und schliesslich mittels einer letzten gemeinen Korruption zur Macht kam, das Geschwür gleichsam aufbäuch und der ganzer Körper beulte, versteckte sich die Mehrzahl der früheren Gegner, flüchtete die deutsche Intelligenz in ein Kellerloch, um dort als Nachtschattengewächs, dem Licht und der Sonne verborgen, allmählich zu ersticken. Jetzt stehen wir vor dem Ende. Jetzt kommt es darauf an, sich gegenseitig wiederzufinden, aufzuklären von Mensch zu Mensch, immer daran zu denken und sich keine Ruhe zu geben, bis auch der letzte von der äussersten Notwendigkeit

Fig. 30. This White Rose leaflet discusses the present tyranny of Germany. (Weisse Rose Stiftung)

An important hiatus intervened before the next two leaflets—"Leaflets of the Resistance in Germany"—were created and anonymously distributed in various cities: in the winter of 1942-43, Hans Scholl and Alexander Schmorell had a close-up look at the war on the eastern front. Based on this experience, their next leaflet, "A Call to All Germans," encouraged the population to disassociate itself from anything connected with National Socialism. The people had to liberate themselves to create a new Germany and a new Europe with freedom of speech, activity, and religion.

The last leaflet, addressed to "students" in a direct call to resistance, was written in early 1943 in the wake of the severe loss of German life in the battle of Stalingrad. The vehement antimilitary language was designed to stir up feelings of loss and tragedy in the German people. Now they had to struggle for freedom and honor, both intrinsic human values lost to the National Socialist Party. As with the other leaflets, the last two strongly urged the students to resist terror at all costs and to spread the message of these six leaf-

lets. After the authors dramatically threw the sixth leaflet down the balustrade at the University of Munich on 18 February, 1943, they were finally arrested. The film *The White Rose* vividly portrays their story.⁴

Scholars of the Holocaust and World War II often ask rescuers of Jews about their motivation for risking their lives to save someone in peril from the government. We can ask the same of the resisters—for example, those in the White Rose Movement. What sparked the dangerous resistance of these Munich students and their professor or of the Hamburg students even after the first series of executions?

They possessed an all-consuming love of their country, which they saw manipulated and strong-armed into submission by the unethical policies and laws created by a perverse leadership. This was, however, the furthest thing from a blind nationalism. True revolutionaries, they were guided by the good of the future state, as underscored in the final leaflet: "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*."⁵

Inge Scholl reflects on the driving force in the lives of the resisters:

But were they heroes? They attempted no superhuman task. They stood up for a simple matter, an elementary principle: the right of the individual to choose his manner of life and to live in freedom. They did not seek martyrdom in the name of any extraordinary idea. They were not chasing after grandiose aims. They wanted to make it possible for you and me to live in a humane society.⁶

Philosophical and humanistic, the resisters saw that in Nazi Germany the good of the people was subordinate to the distorted ideals of the state.⁷ With deep conviction and against the commonly expressed beliefs of the people and the laws of the state, they acted on conscience.

In 1943, resisters reacted to the Nazi order swiftly and decisively, whether in the heart of Munich or on the streets of Warsaw. To carry out their anonymous leafleting, the White Rose resisters had to abide by the guidelines of a human and ethical force that allowed them to confront "legitimate authority." Their far-reaching goal of re-creating a better Germany mitigated any fear of personal harm. The basic Christian principle of love of neighbor inspired the activity of some, especially Willi Graf.



Fig. 31. Willi Graf, a medical student in the White Rose, was executed on 12 October 1943. (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum)

A further motivational factor was the challenge to "legitimate authority" by Count von Galen, bishop of Münster, on euthanasia. Von Galen's public sermons defied the Nazi policy, put in force in October 1939, to eliminate "life unworthy of living"—the incurables and the handicapped, besides the many hundreds of other women and men killed or incarcerated by the Nazis. Beate Ruhm von Oppen believes that the defiance of circulating mimeographed copies of the sermon throughout Germany inspired Hans Scholl to consider leaflets as a vehicle of information and protest.⁸

At the core of the spirit of resistance, especially for Hans and Sophie Scholl, was the role model provided by their father. A political and humanistic freethinker once sentenced to four months in prison, he believed Hitler to be "the Scourge of God." Hans and his friends had also personally experienced the violence, bloodshed, and death of Germany's young men in the Russian campaign. They witnessed the victimization of Jews in the concentration camps in the East. And their experiences in the medical corps in Russia, described especially in the final two leaflets in February 1943, sharpened their antiwar views.



Fig. 32. Departing for Russia, left to right: Hans Scholl, Sophie Scholl, and Christoph Probst. (George [Jürgen] Wittenstein)

Alexander Schmorell was born in Orenburg, Russia, and Kurt Huber, in Chur, Switzerland. Like the rescuer Oskar Schindler, who came from the Sudetenland (Czechoslovakia), they may have been “different” from the traditional German and more open to change because of their geographic and national backgrounds.⁹ Huber's philosophical training also led him to resist. In his final statement to the court, he declared,

What I intended to accomplish was to rouse the student body, not by means of an organization, but solely by my simple words; to urge them, not to violence, but to moral insight into the existing serious deficiencies of our political system. To urge the return to clear moral principles, to the constitutional state, to mutual trust between men.¹⁰

Huber's words provide the backbone for the rationale and the resistance activity of the White Rose members. Refusing to be bystanders at a time when the soul of Germany was becoming more and more laden with evil, these resisters challenged the status quo at the risk of their lives. Their moral courage to confront the spreading evil in a philosophical, political, and ethical manner remains a beacon of

light in an otherwise dark age of Germany's history.

The White Rose Movement Today

The White Rose Foundation in Munich developed very differently. At the suggestion of Munich's mayor, other cities in Germany also supported it under the name “Community of Cities in the Sign of the White Rose.” The monies needed to finance the foundation came from seven cities where groups of the White Rose had been active from 1942 until the end of the war. Full members of the foundation were those who were either themselves active in the White Rose, were convicted, or were not discovered by the Nazis; one member of each of the families of the executed could also be a full member. Anyone who agreed with its goals could become a supporting member. It now has about 350 members.

The goals of the foundation are, according to §2 of the statute:

- 1) to create exhibits and publications about the White Rose
- 2) investigate sources in archives and contacts with witnesses
- 3) establish a center for information and documentation about the White Rose
- 4) encourage conversations with students and teachers, and public talks and discussions in institutes of learning
- 5) cooperate, especially with the Goethe Institute, in order to raise awareness of the White Rose in foreign countries and to present German history in a more differentiated fashion
- 6) collaborate with groups and institutions that work against racism and any form of intolerance
- 7) exercise neutrality concerning political parties

Since 1991, there has been a traveling exhibit, “The White Rose.” The text was written by survivors and members of the resistance group. Otl Aicher, a friend of Hans and Sophie Scholl and after the war the founder of the “Hochschule für Gestaltung” (Academy for Design) in Ulm, designed the exhibit with Franz Josef Müller. On loan throughout Germany in two identical versions and still in high demand, it is shown mainly in schools, churches, universities, and other institutions of learning. In the new German states it adds new historical facts about German resistance after the communist era.

The exhibit is accompanied by a catalog filled with photographs; 45,000 copies have been distributed so far.

Both the exhibit and the catalog continue to travel worldwide in German, English, Italian, and French versions, and have been seen in the United States, England, Canada, Scandinavia, Italy, France, and Austria.

The exhibit initiates many conversations between survivors of the White Rose and pupils, students, and other visitors. But also independently of the exhibit the survivors meet with many different groups—112 in Germany in 1995 alone.

These conversations point out there were people in Germany, even if too few in number, who were not only against National Socialism but were willing to act on it. After the war, after 1945, however, there was a great silence about the resistance. The majority of the German people still believed in Hitler, and therefore it was difficult to hear about resistance, to hear of examples showing that it was certainly possible to do something against the National Socialists—by passive resistance, for example; active resistance, which was very dangerous, was not necessarily the right path for every German. But Germans were not interested in these matters after 1945, probably because they had, in large measure unconsciously, become complicit in the crimes of the National Socialists. They had a very hard time facing German history the way it had really happened. The crimes against other peoples, especially against the Jews but also against the Russians, the Poles, even their own people: they closed their eyes against those.

The goal of the foundation is to make German resistance known to young Germans, to make them realize that Germans who lived under National Socialism and supported it were, at least in the fifties, only partially approachable. Beginning in 1968—and here the student revolts were the trigger—young people began to be interested in finding out what had happened under National Socialism, and the issue of German resistance arose. Young Germans began to ask their parents and later their grandparents: How was it possible that you could let this happen? How was it possible that you did not know anything, as you claim? How was it possible that you willingly and gladly believed in the Führer, marched behind him, fought his wars, and saw Jews forced to wear the yellow star and taken away while the synagogues were being burnt?

The White Rose Foundation's mission is to answer these questions for young people. We work together with schools, independent

youth organizations, church-related groups, nondenominational groups, and students. We collaborate with organizations of people who were persecuted, some of whom are still alive, in order to raise awareness. The best avenue for information is to present German resistance in German schoolbooks. This has now been accomplished. Young people find it easier to identify with people almost their own age; the youngest of us were seventeen or eighteen or slightly older, while Hans Scholl, Willi Graf, and others were twenty-three and twenty-four years old. That makes it easier for today's youth to imagine them in the social environment of their time and thus gain an understanding of youth under National Socialism.

We reach a great number of young Germans through discussions. In the groups we meet, the teachers prepare the way with information. Several helpful films, especially *The White Rose* by Michael Verhoeven, impressively portray our history. *The White Rose* is shown at least once, and sometimes two or more times, every year on German State television, so the level of recognition of our group is very high. The aim is not only to depict National Socialism historically, but mainly to show what could be done against Nazism, by focusing on a specific group that had faces, can be recognized, and can be accepted in its social surrounding.

The White Rose Foundation also gets involved when neo-Nazis, right-wing radicals, racism, and xenophobia raise their heads in Germany. We were the first to summon people to protest racism, and four thousand students showed up in front of Munich University in August 1992.

We demanded that all superior-court judges interpret the laws against racism stringently and that foreigners not be treated as second-class in our country. We stand for the same humanity we called for in our flyers of 1942.

The foundation has a public voice. The interviews on radio and television and the comments and reports on our events attest to this. Every German school covers the White Rose in history class. Since the White Rose is a part of the best history of our people, in Ulm and at the universities of Munich and Hamburg we will establish memorials that will offer information and ideas about the White Rose to future generations.

In addition, the city of Munich and the Organization of Bavarian Publishers and Booksellers have established an annual book

award for authors who take a stand for human rights and provide examples of commitment in biographies, history books, dramas, novels, and poetry. This distinction has developed into an important literary award.

The success of our endeavor is reflected in the more than two hundred German schools and institutions named after Hans and Sophie Scholl or other members of the White Rose.

In his parting letter to his sister Anneliese, just before his execution, Willi Graf wrote, "Carry on what we have begun!"

To carry on just this legacy is our intention today.

Notes

1. This essay was first published in John J. Michalczyk, ed., *Resisters, Rescuers, and Refugees: Historical and Ethical Issues*, Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1997.)
2. Inge Scholl, *The White Rose: Munich, 1942-1943* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1983), p. 74.
3. Scholl, p. 75.
4. Dir. Michael Verhoeven: MGM/UA, 1983.
5. Scholl (emphasis added), p. 92.
6. Scholl, p. 4.
7. For the priority of the state over the individual, especially in the medical field, to which many of the White Rose Movement participants dedicated their student years, consult our *Medicine, Ethics, and the Third Reich: Historical and Contemporary Issues* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1994).
8. Beate Ruhm von Oppen, "Student Rebellion and the Nazis: 'The White Rose' in Its Setting," *St. John's Review*, Winter 1984, p. 16. For a more detailed analysis of the White Rose Movement, see Richard Hanser, *A Noble Treason: The Revolt of the Munich Student against Hitler* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1979); and Hermann Vinke, *The Short Life of Sophie Scholl* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).
9. In personal correspondence (letter to author, July 8, 1995), Franz Müller points out that Huber visited the Eberhard-Ludwig Gymnasium in Stuttgart, where years later Claus and Berthold von Stauffenberg were pupils, and that Würtemberg was the land of Huber, the Scholls, the Stauffenbergs, Müller and his fellow pupils, and Georg Elser, who nearly killed Hitler with a bomb in November 1939.
10. Scholl, p. 63.

The Struggle Continues: Hate Crime in Germany Today

Anna E. Rosmus

In spite of the most severe border controls and tight laws to prevent foreigners from living in Europe, millions do cross the borders into Germany, and hundreds of thousands ask for asylum every year. Half of them are Muslims. Except for a total of some 5 percent, Germany deports all of them, usually on the simple ground that they entered via a "third" country where they could be considered safe as well. Often, even in court, their legitimate and life-threatening concerns are being ignored. While waiting in German detention centers, many try to kill themselves, and even during their deportation, raw violence is documented, not prevented. The majority of citizens remains passive to their plight, however, and many conservative forces demand even harsher procedures.

When journalists such as Roger Cohen observed "It is no longer Communism that haunts Europe: it is the outsider,"¹ not many of us were relieved. On one hand, we did realize that Leila Khalid, thirty years ago an infamous Arab hijacker, is now a welcome speaker among intellectuals in several European countries. Extremists unite and copy each other. Highly questionable businesses are made of their collaboration. German politicians as well have done quite their "share" to appease possible tensions, resulting from taking too close a look into terrorist activities. On the other hand, we worried about Europe's persistent—if not increasing—aversion to "regular" foreigners. The most common connotation of the word "immigrant" is indeed "problem," not "potential." One needs only mention "Jew" or "Muslim," and many are besides themselves.

The aversion to Muslims in the masses has only marginally to do with re-occurring acts of high profile terrorism: Be it historically the hijacked commercial plane in Marseilles that was to be flown into the Eiffel Tower in Paris in December 1994, or the murdered Israeli team at the 1972 Olympic games in Munich. One only need read the news headlines following the 11 September 2001 tragedy to view a global anti-Muslim cancer spreading. Following a terrorist action, those in Germany who already object to "regular" foreigners, are usually the first ones to say: "You see, what I mean? Told you so. They are trouble. Keep them out of our coun-