



Spring 2014

# “Long Live Freedom!”: Moral Motives Behind the White Rose Resistance

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# “Long Live Freedom!”: Moral Motives Behind the White Rose Resistance

## **Abstract**

This paper examines the motives behind the White Rose resistance group. Active from 1942-1943, the White Rose consisted primarily of university students who produced anti-Nazi leaflets. By examining documents such as letters, diaries, the leaflets themselves, and Gestapo interrogations, the motives of the group are evident. The members resisted the Nazi regime for moral and ideological reasons, specifically in relation to the failures World War II, atrocities committed by Nazis in Poland and the Eastern Front, the restriction on personal rights, and an inner duty to oppose the regime.

## **Keywords**

The White Rose, Resistance, Nazism, World War II, Propaganda, Regime, Gestapo

## **Disciplines**

European History | History | Military History | Social History

## **Comments**

This History Senior Thesis was written for Professor William Bowman's course HIST 418: *Nazism* in the Spring of 2014.

“Long Live Freedom!”:

Moral Motives behind the White Rose Resistance

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History 418

March 21, 2014

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I affirm I have upheld the highest principles of honesty and integrity in my academic work and have not witnessed a violation to the Honor Code.

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## Timeline

- Fall 1940: Hans Scholl introduced to Alex Schmorell by George Wittenstein.
- May 1942: Sophie Scholl began studying at the University of Munich.
- June 27, 1942: Leaflet I mailed.
- June 30-July 1, 1942: Leaflet II mailed.
- First week of July, 1942: Leaflet III mailed.
- July 12, 1942: Leaflet IV mailed.
- July 23-November 6, 1942: Hans Scholl, Alex Schmorell, and Willi Graf sent to Russia as medics.
- November 1942: Kurt Huber and Willi Graf became involved in White Rose activities.
- November 1942: Hans Scholl and Schmorell met Falk Harnack of The Red Orchestra.
- November 1942-January 1943: The White Rose attempted to form other cells across the country, including the eventually prosecuted Hamburg cell.
- January 1943: Leaflet V was mailed on a much larger scale than previous leaflets.
- January 13, 1943: Uprising at the University of Munich sparked by the *Gauleiter*.
- January 31, 1943: Christoph Probst wrote the seventh, unpublished leaflet.
- February 3, 8, & 15, 1943: Hans Scholl, Graf, and Schmorell painted anti-Nazi slogans around Munich in tar paint.
- February 16-18, 1943: Leaflet VI was mailed.
- February 18, 1943: Sophie and Hans Scholl were arrested at the University of Munich; Graf arrested later that day.
- February 19, 1943: Probst arrested.
- February 22, 1943: Trial and execution of Hans and Sophie Scholl and Probst.
- February 24, 1943: Schmorell arrested.
- February 26, 1943: Huber arrested.
- April 19, 1943: Trial of Huber, Schmorell, and Graf.
- July 13, 1943: Schmorell and Huber executed.
- October 12, 1943: Graf executed.

Resistance against the Nazi regime is one of many facets of the study of The Third Reich. Though no resistance effort succeeded in toppling the regime, it is still vital to study resistance efforts in order to gain a complete understanding of life under National Socialism. The different levels of resistance—from personal opposition, to passive and active resistance—illuminate the complexities of German society under Hitler. The study of resistance highlights how not all people were in favor of Nazism and it reveals a range of motives behind acts of resistance, which also vary widely. By examining resistance, scholars are able to gain a more realistic understanding of the mindset of Germans during Hitler's regime and therefore a more complicated yet more factual analysis of Nazi Germany as a whole. One resistance group worth examining is the White Rose, a group made up largely of students at the University of Munich, active from 1942-1943. An examination of the motives of each primary member is particularly helpful in understanding resistance in Nazi Germany. The six people executed in 1943 for their activities in the White Rose were motivated primarily by moral and ideological reasons, though these reasons differed slightly based on their personal experiences. Their purely ideological motives not only heavily influenced the way they resisted the Nazi regime, but also the reasons they have been memorialized.

To understand the White Rose and its place in German history, we must first examine resistance more broadly in Nazi Germany.<sup>1</sup> First, it is important to understand the difference between opposition and resistance as the two words have sometimes been used interchangeably

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<sup>1</sup> Much has been written about German resistance to the Nazi regime, see: Peter Hoffman, *German Resistance to Hitler* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Hans Rothfels, *The German Opposition to Hitler* (London: Oswald Wolf, 1961); Joachim Fest, *Plotting Hitler's Death: The Story of German Resistance*, trans. Bruce Little (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996); Michael C. Thomsett, *The German Opposition to Hitler: The Resistance, the Underground, and Assassination Plots, 1938-1945* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1997); Frank McDonough, *Opposition and Resistance in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Hans Mommsen and Angus McGeoch, *Germans Against Hitler: The Stauffenberg Plot and Resistance Under the Third Reich* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009); Francis R. Nicosia and Lawrence D. Stokes, eds., *Germans Against Hitler: Nonconformity, Opposition, and Resistance in the Third Reich: Essays in Honour of Peter Hoffman* (New York: Berg, 1990).

in scholarship. Opposition occurred on an individual level throughout Germany, as people opposed the practices or ideology of the Nazis without necessarily acting against it in any way. Resistance denotes some sort of action in revolt against the government, though types of resistance varied widely. Early resistance came from leftist organizations—Social Democrats, Communists, trade unions—but was quickly eliminated by the Nazi coordination practices and these groups had to resort to underground activity.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the Nazi Regime, Germans most commonly resisted on an individual level, engaging in activities such as helping or hiding Jews, or attempting to hinder or slow the Nazi war machine.<sup>3</sup> Though these acts may have been small, they were vital to the overall tenor of German resistance. Catholic and Lutheran churches, despite officially condoning National Socialism, openly protested the Nazi euthanasia program which ended in 1941; church leaders counted this as a victory resulting from their protest, though the killing continued in concentration camps.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the most active and famous resistance groups included the Red Orchestra, the Kreisau Circle, the White Rose, and the July Plot.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to this overview of resistance in Nazi Germany, background information on the city of Munich is fundamental to the study of the White Rose because Bavarian attitude towards Nazism likely inspired the members' opinions.<sup>6</sup> Munich, the capital of Bavaria, was known as the “capital of the [Nazi] movement;” here, the Nazi party was founded in 1919, and Hitler staged his Beer Hall putsch in 1923. The city continued to be the party's headquarters until 1945.<sup>7</sup> However, Munich did not support the regime as intensely as one may expect. Munich and Bavaria had the lowest percentages of votes for National Socialism in the Reich in the election

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<sup>2</sup> Hoffman, *German Resistance to Hitler*, 53.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>5</sup> All are discussed throughout Hoffman's piece.

<sup>6</sup> For an in depth explanation of Munich's role in the rise of National Socialism, see David Clay Large, *Where Ghosts Walked: Munich's Road to the Third Reich* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> David Clay Large, “White Rose and Brown City: Anti-Nazi Resistance in the ‘Capital of the Movement,’” *Soundings* xxv, no. 31 (1994): 15.

on March 5, 1933. Additionally, Bavaria was the last place within the Third Reich to be fully coordinated into the Nazi state. This lackluster support stemmed largely from Bavarian hostility towards Prussians. The “conservative establishment in Munich and Bavaria” was reluctant to “turn over power to Germany’s new rulers....this reluctance, in turn, stemmed...from a long standing hostility in the German south (especially Bavaria) to strong centralized control from Berlin. Hitler, though born in Austria and officially a citizen of Munich, was known to be an arch-centralizer and enemy of regional particularism.”<sup>8</sup> As historian David Clay Large explains, Bavarians clashed with the establishment of the Nazi regime not necessarily because of ideology, but because of resistance to the outside power imposed upon the region. This hostility towards the regime was felt not only by the Bavarian elite, but also by the general population of Munich.

The citizens of Munich resisted the Nazi regime in multiple ways, which varied in intensity. Beyond political groups, Munichers revolted against the Third Reich in everyday life, particularly when it came to recognizing the regime: “[T]here were many relatively innocuous features of non-conformity people insisting upon saying *Grüß Gott* rather than *Heil Hitler*, or taking a detour around the shrine commemorating the Nazi martyrs fallen in the Beer Hall putsch so as to avoid giving the requisite Hitler salute.”<sup>9</sup> By using the common greeting and avoiding *Heil Hitler*, Munichers actively defied the Nazi government. In some cases, the people of Munich went beyond everyday gestures. In November 1939, Georg Elser attempted to assassinate Hitler by placing a bomb behind the podium in the Bürgerbräu Beer Hall, though Hitler left shortly before the bomb exploded.<sup>10</sup> In addition, and more closely tied to the activities

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<sup>8</sup> Leftist also resisted the rise of National Socialism in Munich, as they did throughout Germany, and the threat from Socialists and Communists was eliminated during the coordination process. Large notes how “most of the early inmates of Dachau, the pilot concentration camp on outskirts of Munich, were Communists.” Large, “White Rose and Brown City,” 16.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



of the White Rose, there was a student uprising at the University of Munich in January 1943. Munich's Nazi Gauleiter Giesler gave a lecture to commemorate the 470<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the University; in his speech he said, "[W]omen students should be home making babies for the Führer rather than taking up places at the university."<sup>11</sup> Female students began to leave in protest of these remarks, and when the Gauleiter told the Gestapo to arrest the women, the male students, from various military companies, rose to the women's defense preventing their arrests.<sup>12</sup> Besides the activities of the White Rose, this brief student uprising was the only other major resistance activity at the University of Munich. Overall, the hostile feelings of many Bavarians had towards the regime, and the multiple acts of insurrection created a somewhat anti-Nazi environment that led the members of the White Rose to believe their actions would spur further acts of resistance. Though this did not occur, it is nevertheless important to examine the state of Munich and Bavaria at the time the group since it is the environment that produced the White Rose activities.

Lastly, a brief explanation of the actions of the White Rose is necessary to examine their motives.<sup>13</sup> The members of the White Rose first began as a group of friends, including but not limited to Hans and Sophie Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, and Christoph Probst, who gathered to discuss shared interests in philosophy, literature, and theology.<sup>14</sup> The close group of friends soon discovered a shared opposition to the Nazi regime. This opposition slowly manifested into a desire to act, particularly after Hans Scholl, Schmorell, and Probst learned more about the

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<sup>11</sup> Large, "White Rose," 22-3. Hans and Sophie Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, and Willi Graf were not at the speech, as they had sworn to never again attend anything supporting the Nazi Party. Ruth Sachs, *White Rose History, Volume II: Journey to Freedom, May 1, 1942-October 12, 1943, Academic Version* (Los Angeles, CA: Exclamation! Publishers, 2005), ch. 31, pg 5. Sachs two volumes on the White Rose are paginated by chapter, each starting on page 1. Her work will be cited by chapter and page number.

<sup>12</sup> Sachs, *Volume II*, ch. 31, pg. 6-7.

<sup>13</sup> This information background section on the activities of the White Rose has been gathered primarily from Sachs, *Volume II*, as the entire work is focused solely on these events.

<sup>14</sup> Schmorell and Probst were childhood friends and met Hans Scholl at the University of Munich as they were all medical students in the army. Sophie later met Schmorell and Probst upon her arrival in Munich.

actions of German troops in Poland. This knowledge spurred the men into taking action against the regime, and in June 1942 they, along with Sophie Scholl, began producing leaflets.<sup>15</sup> The leaflets from 1942 were each titled *Leaflet of the White Rose* and numbered. Hans Scholl and Schmorell were the primary writers of the first four leaflets, which varied in topics: the first used philosophy to encourage civilians into acting against the regime in order to prevent Germany's destruction; the second focused on the crimes Germans committed in Poland; the third defined passive resistance and how every person could harm the war machine; the fourth targeted Lutherans, using religious language to call the population into action.<sup>16</sup> The group mailed the leaflets to people throughout Munich in rapid succession from the end of June to midway through July.<sup>17</sup> The production of leaflets ended when the men learned they were to be sent to the Eastern front.

Hans Scholl, Schmorell, and Probst were stationed as medics in Russia from July 23, 1942-November 1, 1942 and during this time Sophie Scholl had to work in a munitions factory for the war effort. After returning to Germany, the White Rose escalated their activities, especially after the failure at Stalingrad.<sup>18</sup> Each member attempted to expand the network of resistance in 1943. Traute Lafrenz, who had had small roles in the distribution of the first four leaflets, began a similar group at the University of Hamburg. Scholl and Schmorell brought Willi Graf, a fellow student soldier they met in Russia, and Kurt Huber, a philosophy professor at the

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<sup>15</sup> Though the general scholarship on the White Rose asserts that Hans kept his sister from their actions at first to protect her, Sachs claims she knew from the beginning, since she asked her unofficial fiancé for money for a duplicating machine in May 1942. Sachs gathered this information from an interview with Sophie's fiancé, Fritz Hartnagel. This discovery not only changes a solidified aspect of the White Rose history, but also demonstrates how early the students decided to produce leaflets. Sachs, *Volume II*, ch. 1, pg 4.

<sup>16</sup> Ruth Sachs, "The Leaflets," Center for White Rose Studies, accessed March 17, 2014, [http://www.white-rose-studies.org/The\\_Leaflets.html](http://www.white-rose-studies.org/The_Leaflets.html).

<sup>17</sup> The first was posted on June 27, 1942, the second on June 29, 1942, the third throughout the first week in July, and the fourth on July 12. For more detailed information on the production of the leaflets, see: Sachs, *Volume II*, ch. 7, pg. 1 (*Leaflet I*); *Ibid.*, ch. 7, pg. 4 (*Leaflet II*); *Ibid.*, ch. 8, pg 5 (*Leaflet III*); *Ibid.*, ch. 8, pg. 12 (*Leaflet IV*).

<sup>18</sup> Christoph Probst's participation in the group dwindles here, as he was transferred to a different University. He also had a wife and three small children, so the other members of the group attempted to shield him from the danger of their activities. Sachs, ch. 1, pg 3.

University of Munich, into their active resistance. Hans Scholl and Schmorell also contacted Falk Harnack, who had connections to military plots to overthrow the regime since his brother was a member of the Red Orchestra.<sup>19</sup> The group also intensified their efforts in Munich. The men began to paint slogans such as “Down with Hitler” and “Freedom” throughout the city. The last two leaflets were distributed in February 1943, and the group produced large quantities that they mailed from Germany, Vienna, Austria, and around the city of Munich.<sup>20</sup> The last distribution of leaflets occurred on February 18, when the Scholl siblings placed the sixth leaflet outside of classroom doors of the University and threw the remainder over a balcony. This action proved to be the downfall of the White Rose, as the Scholls were spotted by a Nazi maintenance man. They, along with Schmorell, Probst, Graf, Huber, and a host of other family and friends were quickly brought in to be interrogated by the Gestapo.<sup>21</sup> The Scholls and Probst were executed on February 22, mere days after their arrest and the same day as their trial; Huber and Schmorell were executed on July 13, 1943 and Graf was executed on October 12.<sup>22</sup>

In order to analyze the motives behind these actions, it is important to first understand the previous scholarship on the group and its impact on the study and remembrance of their resistance. Inge Scholl’s *Students Against Tyranny: The Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* is significant because it was the first piece of scholarship written about the White Rose.<sup>23</sup> Published in 1952, *Students Against Tyranny* focuses primarily on Scholl’s siblings, Hans and Sophie. Scholl’s work began the academic study of the White Rose, though it is

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<sup>19</sup> Ruth Sachs, “Their Story,” Center for White Rose Studies, accessed March 17, 2014, [http://www.white-rose-studies.org/Their\\_Story.html](http://www.white-rose-studies.org/Their_Story.html).

<sup>20</sup> The fifth was entitled *Leaflets of the Resistance Movement in Germany: A Call to all Germans!* and the sixth, written by Professor Kurt Huber, called to “German Students.” Sachs, “The Leaflets.”

<sup>21</sup> Probst was arrested because Hans Scholl carried Probst’s handwritten seventh leaflet in his pocket on February 18. If Scholl had not been carrying the draft, Probst could quite possibly have been spared, since he had not been fully active in the group since the previous summer. Sachs, “Their Story.”

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Inge Scholl, *Students Against Tyranny: The Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943*, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1970).

problematic because it does not give a comprehensive understanding of the group or even Hans and Sophie. First, Scholl's account of the group's development and actions is written as if she witnessed everything firsthand, but she in fact had no knowledge of their resistance activities until her siblings were arrested. Second, she provides a somewhat superficial view of her siblings and the other members as she does not delve very far into the complexities of each individual, but rather presents them as martyrs. Third, she does not provide extensive detail about the other active members of the White Rose. This lack of consideration is problematic not only because it largely ignores the importance of main members of the group, but also because it set the precedence for many subsequent works about the White Rose. There has been heavy emphasis on the Scholl siblings in the literature on the White Rose, including works extremely similar to Scholl's and a particular focus on Sophie, with multiple biographies and a movie about her.<sup>24</sup> Fourth, Scholl has influenced the scholarship of the White Rose beyond her own work by controlling the personal documents of her siblings. Ruth Sachs explains how Scholl censored the letters and diaries of Hans and Sophie used in Inge Jens' work, causing a more idealized picture of her siblings and hindering the ability to fully understand these two individuals.<sup>25</sup> Overall, Scholl's work has caused limitation to the study of the White Rose, and must therefore be viewed critically.

Like Scholl, George Wittenstein knew the members of the White Rose during their resistance activity, and like Scholl, Wittenstein's writings on the group is flawed. Wittenstein has

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<sup>24</sup> One example of a work that mirror's Scholl's is Toby Alexrod's *Hans and Sophie Scholl: German Resisters of the White Rose* (New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 2001). For works that either focus solely on or give extra emphasis on Sophie Scholl, see: Frank McDonough, *Sophie Scholl: The Real Story of the Woman Who Defied Hitler* (City of Publication Unknown: The History Press: 2009); Herman Vinke, *The Short Life of Sophie Scholl* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984); Richard Hanser, *A Noble Treason: The Story of Sophie Scholl and the White Rose Revolt Against Hitler* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1979); Inge Jens, ed. *At the Heart of the White Rose: Letters and Diaries of Hans and Sophie Scholl*, trans. J. Maxwell Brownjohn (New York: Harper & Row, 1984); *Sophie Scholl: The Final Days*, directed by Marc Rothmund, Broth Film, 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Ruth Sachs, *White Rose History Volume I: Coming Together, January 31, 1933-April 30, 1942, Academic Version* (Los Angeles, CA: Exclamation! Publishers, 2002), ch. 1, pg. 4.

produced multiple pieces discussing the resistance group, including “The White Rose: German Youth Resistance to Hitler, 1939-1942,” “The White Rose: A Commitment,” and a website entitled “Memories of the White Rose.”<sup>26</sup> Wittenstein presents himself as an active member of the resistance group, and his writings seem to be vital primary material. However, Ruth Sachs, the scholar with the most recent and extensive work on the White Rose, revealed that he was not, in fact, active in or knowledgeable of the resistance, but that the main members of the group “consciously limited their association with [Wittenstein] to time in barracks. Rarely if ever did he join them for so much as a meal....they could not trust him (his obvious membership in the Nazi Party probably factored into that equation) so they steered clear of him.”<sup>27</sup> Using interviews with Traute Lafrenz, an active but not primary member of the White Rose and Wittenstein’s inconsistencies in his reconstructed diary and later accounts of the group, Sachs discredits his claims to have been an active resister.<sup>28</sup> His scholarship on the White Rose must therefore be taken lightly as he did not have the first-hand knowledge to support his work. Due to these flaws, Wittenstein’s most significant addition to the study of the White Rose is not his own writing, but his photographs of the group. Like Scholl, Wittenstein’s scholarship, therefore, first appears to be an excellent source of primary documentation of the White Rose, but it actually should not be weighed heavily in a study of the resistance group.

Other than work written by those who personally knew the members of the White Rose, there is a range of literature about the group. One type of scholarship about the group has very specific, often narrow purposes; these shorter pieces include works such as Paul Rutschmann’s

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<sup>26</sup> George Wittenstein, “The White Rose: German Youth Resistance to Hitler, 1939-1942,” *Soundings* xxii, no. 31 (1994): 61-74; George Wittenstein, “The White Rose: A Commitment,” in *Confront!: Resistance in Nazi Germany*, ed. John J. Michalczyk (New York: Peter Long, 2004), 191-4; George Wittenstein, “Memories of the White Rose,” *The History Place: Points of View*, accessed January 28, 2009. <http://www.historyplace.com/pointsofview/white-rose1.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> Sachs, *Volume II*, ch. 8 pg. 6.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 46, pg. 7.

“The White Rose in Film and History,” Simon Henderson’s “The White Rose and the definition of ‘Resistance,’” Bernard Witkop’s “The White Rose: Not a Legend But a Challenge,” and John J. Michalczyk and Franz Josef Muller, “The White Rose Student Movement in Germany: Its History and Relevance Today,”<sup>29</sup> While these works each provide useful information on specific aspects of the White Rose, they are either too narrow in their focus to act as comprehensive analyses, or they are too broad, giving condensed versions of the history of the White Rose. Work of this nature generally lack in-depth discussions of the motives of the group’s members, causing them to be problematic as the individual mindset of the group members is vital to understanding the White Rose.

Additionally, there are a few larger works worth noting in the scholarship of the White Rose. Richard Hanser’s *A Noble Treason* provides a personal look at the members of the White Rose, including important motivational insights. Unfortunately, it sometimes lapses into what Sachs describes as “the temptation to follow the White Rose legend,” the martyrdom of the members.<sup>30</sup> Hanser’s detailed work, therefore, is somewhat unreliable, as the influence of the “White Rose legend” causes his work to be less realistic. Another important piece of scholarship is Inge Jens’ *At the Heart of the White Rose: Letters and Diaries of Hans and Sophie Scholl*. This book is almost exclusively the letters and diary entries of Hans and Sophie, with short sections of additional information provided by Jens. These primary sources provide significant resources to the understanding of Hans’ and Sophie’s state of mind before and during their resistance movement, yet by being focused solely on the Scholls, the importance of the other members and

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<sup>29</sup> Paul Rutschmann, “The White Rose in Film and History,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 27, no. 3 (August 2007): 371-390; Simon Henderson, “The White Rose and the Definition of ‘Resistance,’” *History Review* 53 (Dec 2005): 42-7.; John J. Michaelczyk and Franz Josef Muller, “The White Rose Student Movement,” in *Confront! Resistance in Nazi Germany*, ed. John J. Michalczyk (New York: Peter Lang, 2004); Bernad Witkop, “The White Rose: Not A Legend But a Challenge,” *Soundings* xxv, no. 31 (1994): 51-66.

<sup>30</sup> Sachs, *Volume I*, ch. 1 pg. 6.

their own motivations gets lost.<sup>31</sup> In addition, Jens' work is an example of the censorship Inge Scholl has employed on her siblings' personal writing. This editing tends to sanitize the representation of Hans and Sophie, limiting their complexity, and, as a result, a realistic representation of the two. Finally, Annette E. Dumbach and Jud Newborn's *Shattering the German Night: The Story of the White Rose* provides a very informative representation of the most active members of the White Rose, and successfully illustrates their motives. Their work is problematic not necessarily in its scholarly argument, but in the authors' methodology; *Shattering the German Night* lacks any form of citations beyond a bibliography, making it difficult for researchers to use their material for further scholarship and, as Sachs claimed, enabling Dumbach and Newborn to use certain primary material anachronistically.<sup>32</sup> Overall, these three sources provide significant research to the study of the White Rose, but each has shortcomings that make them somewhat unreliable in examinations of the group.

The most significant work on the White Rose is that of Ruth Sachs; her *White Rose History Volume I* and *II* are the largest and most detailed scholarship on the resistance group. First published in 2002, with updates in 2005 and 2007, Sachs' work builds off of the secondary material already discussed, as well as extensive primary research, such as interviews with a great number of remaining family and friends of the members of the resistance group. *Volume I* follows the main and outlying members of the White Rose from 1933-1942, before any resistance activity. This detailed information illuminates the personal backgrounds that likely influenced the members' eventual decisions to resist actively. *Volume II* examines the events between May 1, 1942-October 12, 1943. Using letters, diaries, interviews, the White Rose leaflets, and Gestapo interrogation transcripts, Sachs manages to reconstruct the lives of all who

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<sup>31</sup> Jens edited a similar book about Willi Graf, with his sister Anneliese Knoop-Graf, entitled *Willi Graf, Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, using his letters and diaries, but I did not have access to it because of language barriers.

<sup>32</sup> Sachs, *Volume I*, ch 1. pg 6.

played some role in the active resistance on almost a day-to-day basis. She succeeds in depicting their mindsets and actions as accurately as possible, whether or not she portrays a member positively. Sachs' focus on depicting the members of the White Rose as realistically as possible causes her work to be highly useful for understanding the resistance group; her approach allows fellow researchers to understand the complexities of each individual and their motives for participating in active resistance. Sachs' work is only slightly problematic because of the sheer magnitude of it; her extensive detail can be cumbersome, and sometimes feels unnecessary to the study of the White Rose. The most effective way to examine the motives behind the resistance, therefore, is by illustrating the personal choices for resisting in a concise manner, demonstrating that the six active members who were executed—Hans and Sophie Scholl, Willi Graf, Alexander Schmorell, Christoph Probst, and Kurt Huber—were compelled to act based on their personal ideological oppositions to the actions of the Nazi regime.

There were multiple factors that influenced these individuals to clash with the Nazi Regime; one of the most prominent and early cause was the Second World War. Though not a great deal was available about the pre-1942 misgivings of every member of the White Rose, the Scholl siblings' disdain for the war is clear in their writing. Sophie Scholl's contempt existed from the beginning of the war. In 1939, she wrote her fiancé, Fritz Hartnagel, a career military officer, "I just can't grasp that people's lives are now under constant threat from other people. I'll never understand it, and I find it terrible. Don't go telling me it's for the Fatherland's sake."<sup>33</sup> Scholl's incomprehension of the value of war turned to disdain and possible hopelessness as the war continued. While Hartnagel was deployed, Scholl wrote him on multiple occasions discussing these negative feelings; for example, on April 9, 1940, Scholl wrote, "There are times

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<sup>33</sup> Sophie Scholl to Fritz Hartnagel, September 5, 1939, in *Heart of the White Rose*, 36.



when I dread the war and feel like giving up hope completely.”<sup>34</sup> Her hopelessness about the war demonstrated a more generally feeling about life under the regime. At the very least, her hopelessness demonstrates a dislike of the war that would eventually intensify as the brutality and failures of the war increased.

Similarly, Hans Scholl illustrated early disdain for the war. In a complicated diary entry from 1939, he wrote, “I feel no desire for ‘heroism’ in war...We were glad at first when the war had finally broken out. It’s bound to bring release from the yoke. The yoke Germany has brought upon itself.”<sup>35</sup> The “yoke” he wrote of can be understood as the Nazi regime, and he clearly hoped that the war will bring about an end to National Socialism. This entry also demonstrates his lack of dedication to fighting in the war. Unlike Hartnagel, he felt no duty to be heroic for the Fatherland. Later in the war, he expressed great contempt in a letter to his parents: “It’s awful that every road should be closed to us at our age, just when the world should be our oyster! One feels more and more like a prisoner. Let’s hope this war will soon be over.”<sup>36</sup> By 1941, Scholl’s lack of heroism developed into complete disgruntlement towards the war. He despised it for taking away his youth and seems to exhibit some of his sister’s hopelessness through feeling like a prisoner. His early writing on the war, therefore, highlights the negative feelings Scholl had towards the war before his opposition developed into resistance.

As World War II progressed, the atrocities committed by Nazis became one of the primary motives behind the resistance of the White Rose. The members of the White Rose either personally witnessed or heard about the brutality in Poland and the Eastern front. Hans and Alex learned of the mass killings in Poland from Manfred Eickemeyer, an architect who lived in both

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<sup>34</sup> Scholl to Hartnagel, April 9, 1940, in *Heart of the White Rose*, 65.

<sup>35</sup> Hans Scholl, diary entry, September 20, 1939, in *Heart of the White Rose*, 42.

<sup>36</sup> Scholl to Robert and Magdalena Scholl, January 28, 1941, in *Heart of the White Rose*, 98.

Munich and Cracow, Poland during the war.<sup>37</sup> As Dumbach and Newborn explain, “Eickemeyer...described to Hans and Alex how special squads of the SS had rounded up men, women, and children, loaded them into trucks, brought them to the outskirts of town, ordered them to dig trenches, and then shot them in groups—one group after another, falling in layers on the bodies underneath. He told them that the Wehrmacht stood by and did nothing to stop it.”<sup>38</sup> This news deeply affected Hans and Schmorell, and is the event that, according to Sachs, made them “[a]ngry enough to finally do something.”<sup>39</sup> Likewise, Sophie Scholl learned about the atrocities in Poland and the Eastern Front from Hartnagel, who was deployed for most of the war. In 1942, he wrote to her saying, “It was alarming, the cynical coolness of my C.O. as he told of the slaughter of all the Jews of occupied Russia. At the same time, he is completely convinced of the justice of this course of action.”<sup>40</sup> Though Scholl’s response is unknown, Hartnagel’s letter likely provided the same influence on Scholl as Eickemeyer’s stories did on her brother and Schmorell. Because of the close relationships between the Scholl siblings and Schmorell, it can logically be assumed that the three shared their secondhand information. The knowledge of the Nazi atrocities in Poland directly correlated with the start of their resistance.

Not long after Eickemeyer’s and Hartnagel’s revelations, the group began printing leaflets. Their disgust for the mass killings appears in *Leaflet II*, which states, “Poland was conquered, three hundred thousand Jews have been murdered in that country in the most bestial manner imaginable. In this we see a terrible crime against the dignity of mankind, a crime that cannot be compared with any other in the history of mankind. Jews are human beings too...these crimes are being committed against human beings.” The leaflet went on to explain how “the

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<sup>37</sup> Sachs, *Volume II*, ch5. pg. 6.

<sup>38</sup> Dumbach and Newborn, *Shattering the German Night*, 119.

<sup>39</sup> Sachs, *Volume II*, ch. 5, pg. 6.

<sup>40</sup> Hartnagel to Sophie Scholl, June 26, 1942, cited in Sachs, *Volume II*, ch. 6 pg. 9.

entire population of aristocratic Polish youth has been exterminated,” not just Jews, proclaiming the actions of Nazis in Poland to be the “most abominable, most degrading crimes.”<sup>41</sup> *Leaflet II* demonstrates the significant impact of the information Eickemeyer told Hans Scholl and Schmorell and Hartnagel told Sophie Scholl. They viewed the actions of the Nazis in Poland as morally repugnant, and felt they needed to share that information with the public. The news of the atrocities, therefore, directly impacted the Scholls’ and Schmorell’s decisions to resist the regime.

Willi Graf and Kurt Huber were also incensed by the mass killings being perpetrated by the Nazis, but as neither was aware of the first 4 leaflets, the effect of the events in Poland on Graf and Huber must be understood as part of the build up to their eventual participation in the activities of the White Rose. Like Hans Scholl and Schmorell, Huber learned of the atrocities being committed through another person, specifically a soldier named Eduard: “During his [Huber’s] conversations with Eduard, he introduced the topic of forced sterilizations of Polish Jews and female Polish students...Professor Huber may have assented to the Nazi political platform, but forced sterilizations bother him...Eduard stunned the professor with his next words. He personally witnessed the mass executions of Jews in the Crimea. Sparing Kurt Huber not one detail, Eduard described the horrors he had seen with his own eyes.”<sup>42</sup> The news of the atrocities committed stunned and enraged Huber as well, and it created one of his major grievances against the regime.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> “Leaflet of the White Rose II,” *Leaflets of the White Rose*, trans. Ruth Sachs (Los Angeles: Exclamation! Publishers, 2002); Sachs’ translated booklet of the leaflets does not have page numbers, and the leaflets will subsequently be referred to in citation by their title. In addition, I will refer in text to each leaflet in italics with the Roman Numeral afterwards that corresponds with the order of publication for consistency. Therefore, the sixth leaflet “German Students!” will be referred to as *Leaflet VI* in text, and so on. Lastly, Sachs uses bold to emphasize places in the leaflets that were originally emphasized with spaced out words. These have been changed to italics.

<sup>42</sup> Eduard H., *Bericht eines ehemaligen Studenten von Professor Huber (Eduard H.)*, undated, sent to Inge Scholl, cited in Sachs, *Volume II*, ch. 9, pg 4-5.

<sup>43</sup> Sachs, *Volume II*, ch. 9, pg 5.

In contrast, Graf's knowledge of the atrocities occurring on the Eastern front came from firsthand experience. Graf had been deployed to Poland before meeting the rest of the White Rose, and what he witnessed, according to Dumbach and Newborn, "seared his soul: it was not just the blood and agony of the wounded that profoundly disturbed him, it was the unspeakable cruelty and brutality of his fellow soldiers in dealing with unarmed conquered people. 'I wish I never had to see everything I've watched in these past days,' he wrote to his sister Anneliese from Russia."<sup>44</sup> Though Dumbach and Newborn do not cite more than this excerpt, it can be assumed their somewhat dramatic conclusions are correct; Graf was so shaken by the atrocities that he wished to forget witnessing them. By the time the first leaflet operation has been completed, the members of the White Rose have all in some way been privy to the atrocities being committed in Poland and on the Eastern front. More significantly, the majority of the members, even though they were not all connected at that time, expressed obvious distaste for these actions.

The group's revulsion towards the mass killings heightened during the summer Probst, Hans Scholl, Schmorell, and Graf were deployed to the Eastern front. On their way to Russia, the train had an unexpected layover in Warsaw, giving them a firsthand experience of the atrocities being committed there. For Graf, this trip reaffirmed the revulsion he experienced in his earlier deployment. He wrote in his journal: "The misery stares us in the face. I hope I never see Warsaw in these conditions again." Scholl too wrote about his experience in Warsaw. To Huber, he noted that "[t]he city, the ghetto, and everything related to it made a decisive impression on everyone."<sup>45</sup> He was more direct about the conditions in a letter to his parents: "Warsaw would sicken me in the long run. Thank God we're moving on tomorrow. The ruins alone are food

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<sup>44</sup> Dumbach and Newborn, *Shattering the German Night*, 72.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

enough for thought, but...half-starved children sprawl in the street and whimper for bread...The mood is universally doom-laden, but I nonetheless believe in the inexhaustible strength of the Polish people.”<sup>46</sup> Actually seeing the brutality intensified the men’s revulsion towards the regime and the general actions of their fellow soldiers.

Their disgust towards Nazi violence was exhibited in an instance at the end of their deployment. On their return from the Eastern front, they intervened in an instance of brutality: “At the Polish border, they were almost arrested. Again the train had stopped, and this time they watched as German guards abused, beat, and stamped on Russian POWs. Their rage exploded. Alex and Hans and Willi jumped off the train and, cursing, fell on the guards. The train began to move, and before the stunned guards could react, the three of them had swung aboard.”<sup>47</sup> This enraged act highlights the soldiers’ disgust towards the Nazi inhumane treatment of POWs. After hearing about the mistreatment of Poles, seeing it firsthand, and witnessing the brutality of German soldiers against Russians, Graf, Schmorell, and Hans Scholl returned to Munich with intensified dedication to end the regime. The brutality of Nazis in Poland and to a lesser extent on the Eastern Front, therefore, proved an important influence of the White Rose, as each was morally opposed to the extensive violence against innocent people.

After the student soldiers returned to Munich, the members of the White Rose were further motivated by the military failures of Nazi Germany, particularly Stalingrad.<sup>48</sup> This loss deeply impacted all members of the White Rose. To begin with, Sophie Scholl learned of the

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<sup>46</sup> Hans Scholl to Robert and Magdalena Scholl, July 27, 1942, in *Heart of the White Rose*, 211.

<sup>47</sup> Dumbach and Newborn, *Shattering the German Night*, 146.

<sup>48</sup> For more information on the Battle of Stalingrad, see: David M Glantz, *Armageddon in Stalingrad: September-November 1942* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2009); Frank Ellis, *The Stalingrad Cauldron: Inside the Encirclement and Destruction of the 6th Army* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of KS, 2013); Stephen Walsh, *Stalingrad: The Infernal Cauldron, 1942-1943*(New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2000).

horrors of Stalingrad from Hartnagel, who sent her letters from the battle. Sachs summarized how Scholl:

had Fritz's January 17 letter...his battalion having been wiped out and the expectation that he would be captured or killed any day. Fritz had told her that he had frostbite in both hands, because he (and presumably his men) had spent weeks out in the open, unprotected from the brutal Russian winter....The German army that had not been allowed to retreat had to fend for itself in conditions so atrocious as to be utterly hopeless.<sup>49</sup>

The personal account of Stalingrad, particularly with the effect of the battle on Hartnagel, likely had a great impact on Scholl. She explained the importance of Stalingrad in her interrogation:

*"We were convinced that Germany had lost the war and that every life that is sacrificed for this lost cause is sacrificed in vain. The sacrifice demanded at Stalingrad especially moved us to undertake something in opposition to the (in our opinion) senseless shedding of blood"*

[emphasis added by translator].<sup>50</sup> Her emphasis on the sacrifice of human life could be a reflection of the physical sacrifices Hartnagel experienced, or more generally the great loss of life that occurred at Stalingrad. Regardless, Scholl gives Stalingrad as a direct reason for their resistance.

Hans Scholl and Schmorell likewise marked the defeat at Stalingrad as one of their primary motives for resisting. In his interrogation, Scholl discussed the need for the war to end: *"I believed that the military situation rendered a victorious end of the war impossible on our part, especially following the defeat on the Eastern front and the tremendous growth of the military might of England and America. After recognizing this, and following excruciating deliberations, I reached the conclusion that there was only one means of preserving the European 'idea,'*

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<sup>49</sup> Hartnagel to Scholl, January 17, 1943, cited in Sachs, *Volume II*, ch. 38, pg. 9.

<sup>50</sup> "Continuation of the Interrogation of the Accused Sophie Scholl," in *Gestapo Interrogation Transcripts: Willi Graf, Alexander Schmorell, Hans Scholl, and Sophie Scholl, ZC 13267 vol. 1-16*, trans. Ruth Sachs (Los Angeles: Exclamation! Publishers, 2002), 159; Ruth Sachs used bold and increased font size to denote different emphasis or markings by Nazi officials. These emphases will be denoted here with italics. All future italics in quotations from the interrogation transcripts are Sachs' emphasis, unless otherwise noted.

*namely the abridgement of the war.*”<sup>51</sup> Scholl, like his sister, stated that the fall of Stalingrad solidified the notion that German could not win the war and that the end of the war needed to occur to salvage any European society. Schmorell went one step further in his interrogation, directly stating the White Rose’s purpose: “When we called for sabotage in our leaflets, our aim was to force German soldiers to retreat. We saw this as the best possible solution for both sides (for Germany and for Russia).”<sup>52</sup> Here, Schmorell clarified how closely tied the resistance of the group was to the failures of the war. They attempted to recruit fellow Germans into the resistance because they believed the more that resisted, the quicker the war would end. Thus, one of the primary reasons the White Rose resisted was to end the mass casualties of an impossible to win war.

The most notable contribution by Christoph Probst to the White Rose—his seventh, unpublished leaflet—was also motivated primarily by Stalingrad. As the battle occurred, Probst learned of the intentions of the Nazis: “Before Stalingrad officially fell, Christl was aware that Hitler planned to abandon the 80,000 or so soldiers who could conceivably survive the siege. There would be no extrication. These German soldiers would be left to die, or to be captured by the Russians. His wife remembered how deeply that shook him. It upset him to think that his country would abandon its own citizens in such a fashion.”<sup>53</sup> Like the other members of the White Rose, Probst was deeply concerned by the government’s sacrifice of the soldiers in their refusal to retreat. He saw it as an example of the immorality of the government. The disregard for the lives of the soldiers in Stalingrad spurred him to write the seventh leaflet. He focuses

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<sup>51</sup> “Hans, Fritz Scholl, February 18, 1943,” in *Gestapo Interrogation Transcripts: ZC 13267*, 119-20; By “European ‘idea,’” Scholl referred to his pan-European idea for post-WWII government and relations, not un-like the European Union.

<sup>52</sup> “Continuation of interrogation, February 25, 1943,” in *Alexander Schmorell: Gestapo Interrogation Transcript, RGWA1361K-I-8808*, trans. Ruth Sachs (Los Angeles: Exclamation! Publishers, 2006), 17.

<sup>53</sup> Sachs, *Volume II*, 2007 Update, ch. 35, pg. 1.

primarily on the loss of human life in the leaflet: “200,000 German brothers were sacrificed for the prestige of a militaristic imposter...Hitler refused to allow those who were entrapped and surrounded to retreat to the troops behind the line. Now the blood of 200,000 soldiers who were doomed to death accuses the murderer named Hitler.”<sup>54</sup> While he goes on to discuss the deaths of Jews and Poles, and the removal of rights, his point about Stalingrad illustrates how important it was to the members of the White Rose. They were morally opposed to the government’s lack of effort to prevent such high casualties, and the failures of the war became a primary cause for their resistance.

Though Huber had different reasons for opposing the regime than the rest of the White Rose, the failures of World War II proved to be an essential motive of his resistance as well. Huber saw Stalingrad as a prime example of the leftist turn of the Nazi government. In his Gestapo interrogations, Huber firmly blamed Hitler directly for the failure of Stalingrad: “I am firmly convinced that *since the Fuhrer assumed the high command and dismissed our most competent generals, the striking power of the German army has been catastrophically weakened.* The entire developments of the past 14 days confirm my previous impressions.”<sup>55</sup> To Huber, the failure of Stalingrad showed the incompetence of the Nazi leaders, especially Hitler. He was so incensed by this military failure that Huber wrote the sixth and last published leaflet. In it, he sarcastically recognized Hitler: “The brilliant strategy of a Lance Corporal from the World War has senselessly and irresponsibly driven three hundred thirty thousand German men to death and destruction. Fuhrer, we thank you!”<sup>56</sup> He went on the question the higher party officials more

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<sup>54</sup> “Stalingrad!,” *Leaflets of the White Rose*, trans. Ruth Sachs (Los Angeles: Exclamation! Publications, 2002).

<sup>55</sup> “Kurt Huber Questionnaire and Interrogation, February 27, 1943,” in *Gestapo Interrogation Transcripts: Professor Kurt Huber and Falk Harnack, NJ 1704*, trans. Ruth Sachs (Los Angeles: Exclamation! Publishers, 2004), 26; Ruth Sachs used bold and increased font size to denote markings and emphasis by the Nazi who created the original interrogation transcripts. All further italics from any of the interrogation transcripts will correlate with Sachs’ emphasis unless otherwise noted.

<sup>56</sup> “German Students!,” *Leaflets of the White Rose*, trans. Ruth Sachs (Los Angeles: Exclamation! Publishers, 2002).



generally, while also calling on the German people: “Do you wish to sacrifice the remainder of our German youth to the vile instinct for power of a Party clique?...The terrible blood bath that they have caused in all of Europe in the name of the freedom and honor of the German people—a blood bath that they cause anew every day—has opened the eyes of even the stupidest Germans.”<sup>57</sup> Huber effectively illustrated how disastrous the Nazi motives in World War II were for the German people. His focus on the “sacrifice” and “blood bath” highlighted the harmfulness of the war, especially after it became clear to “even the stupidest of Germans” that they were losing the war. These failures exemplified what Huber saw as the fatal flaws of the regime and he felt compelled to expose them. His interrogation and leaflet, therefore, demonstrate how World War II was an essential motive behind his resistance.

Beyond their opposition of Nazi behavior in World War II, the group was compelled to act because of their differences with the regime’s ideology. More specifically, the members of the White Rose were greatly concerned with the Nazi restrictions on personal freedom. In the earlier leaflets, Hans Scholl and Schmorell questioned the Germans for allowing their freedoms to be taken away without a fight: “Why do you permit this autocrat to rob you of one sphere of your rights after another, little by little, both overtly and in secret?”<sup>58</sup> To contrast the lack of freedom under Nazism, the leaflets called for a “world order that is based on freedom and comes from God” and stated that the “pursuit of happiness should take place free and unencumbered in association and collaboration with the national community.”<sup>59</sup> They continued this theme in the leaflets of 1943: “Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the protection of the individual citizen

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<sup>57</sup> “German Students!,” *Leaflets of the White Rose*.

<sup>58</sup> “Leaflet of the White Rose III.,” *Leaflets of the White Rose*, trans. Ruth Sachs (Los Angeles: Exclamation! Publishers, 2002).

<sup>59</sup> “Leaflet of the White Rose IV.,” *Leaflets of the White Rose*, trans. Ruth Sachs (Los Angeles: Exclamation! Publishers, 2002); “Leaflet of the White Rose III.,” *Leaflets of the White Rose*.

from the caprice of criminal, violent States—these are the bases of the new Europe.”<sup>60</sup> Here, the group demonstrated not simply what they wanted in a post-Nazi Germany, but also the specific problems of the regime. They called it a “criminal, violent State” and contrasted it to the ideas of freedom of speech, religion, and the right to protection, all of which were obviously lacking under the Nazi rule. These themes were continued at greater length in *Leaflet VI*, in which Huber called “personal freedom...the most valuable possession a German owns.”<sup>61</sup> He added, “Freedom and honor! For ten long years, Hitler and his associates have abused, stomped, and twisted these two glorious German words till they are loathsome.”<sup>62</sup> The specific recognition of the importance of freedom, as well as its representation in leaflets written by different authors, defines it as one of the driving factors behind the resistance of the White Rose.

After being arrested, the Scholl siblings and Huber reaffirmed the importance of freedom as a primary motive for resistance. In his interrogation, Huber spoke at length about the need for personal freedoms in society. He claimed that central to his concern over the Nazi regime was “the increasing limitation of the personal freedom of the individual: Freedom of thought, freedom of conscience, freedom to act.”<sup>63</sup> Huber explained that he was not against a Führer because Germany actually had a “Machtstaat,” an authoritarian government that prohibits personal freedoms. He emphasized the need for specific freedoms: “Freedom and truth must once again become the hallmarks of the German press. I have already emphasized the demand for freedom of speech (even if not completely uncensored). But also objective news reporting must once again return to a simple, factual, and as true as possible representation of the facts,

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<sup>60</sup> “Leaflet of the Resistance Movement in Germany. Call to all Germans!,” *Leaflets of the White Rose*, trans. Ruth Sachs (Los Angeles: Exclamation! Publishers, 2002).

<sup>61</sup> “German Students!,” *Leaflets of the White Rose*.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> “Political Confession, Kurt Huber, March 8, 1943,” in *Gestapo Interrogation Transcripts: NJ 1704*, 43.

instead of the exaggerated propaganda currently known.”<sup>64</sup> By specifically addressing these freedoms in his interrogations, Huber illustrates how they were fundamental in his decision to participate in the White Rose. These statements therefore provide insight into Huber’s personal motivations.

Likewise, Sophie Scholl in her interrogation explicitly stated freedom as a primary reason for her resistance. More specifically, she defined it as “intellectual freedom”: “I would like to add as an additional and (in the end) the most important reason for my antipathy to the movement: *I perceive the intellectual freedom* of people to be limited in such a manner as contradicts everything inside of me. In summary, I would like to state that *I personally would like to have nothing to do with National Socialism.*”<sup>65</sup> Her boldness here not only made her position on freedom abundantly clear—“the most important reason”—but also illustrated her general contempt for the regime. Scholl’s dedication to freedom remained with her until the last day of her life. Her cellmate reported her leaving her official indictment on her neatly made bed before her execution; on the back, she wrote “Freedom!”<sup>66</sup> In a very similar fashion, her brother’s final words were shouted from the across the yard as he walked to his execution, and lend themselves to an understanding of the most significant causes for their resistance: “Long live freedom!”<sup>67</sup> Freedom, whether used generally or in specific personal rights, clearly was one of the primary motives for the White Rose, demonstrating how this group was driven by moral and ideological reasons.

To go along with these convictions for freedom, the members of the White Rose each felt a moral duty to do their part to bring about the end of the Nazi regime. This dedication is seen in

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<sup>64</sup> “Political Confession, Kurt Huber, March 8, 1943,” in *Gestapo Interrogation Transcripts: NJ 1704*, 45.

<sup>65</sup> “Sophie Scholl Questionnaire & First Interrogation,” in *Gestapo Interrogation Transcripts : ZC 13267*, 152.

<sup>66</sup> Dumbach and Newborn, *Shattering the German Night*, 204.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

the remembrance of Probst. According to his half-brother Dieter Sasse, ““Every attempt to pigeonhole his motives into this category or the other, be it purely Christian or purely political, is not correct. One must rather view it as a whole. Christl acted out of a moral-ethical sense of duty.””<sup>68</sup> Though not in Probst’s own words, this statement defines his motives by his “moral-ethical sense of duty.” The group’s third leaflet also explicitly states their sense of duty. In a call to the German people, they wrote, “Has your spirit been so devastated by the rape that you forget that it is not only your right, but your *moral duty* to put an end to this system?”<sup>69</sup> This question embodied the importance of morality in motivating of the White Rose. They felt compelled to follow their own moral duty, and believed it was the duty of all Germans to rebel against the regime.

In addition, most members of the White Rose were so convinced of their inner duty that they acknowledged and accepted the fact that their resistance would cause their deaths. Sophie Scholl’s inner duty was first documented in 1940, in a letter to Hartnagel: “Although I don’t know much about politics and have no ambition to do so, I do have some idea of right and wrong, because that has nothing to do with politics and nationality. And I could weep at how mean people are, in high-level politics as well, and how they betray their fellow creatures, perhaps for the sake of personal advantage.”<sup>70</sup> Though she said she had “no ambition” to know about politics, Scholl clearly recognized the lack of moral integrity or “idea of right and wrong” in the Nazi regime. Later that year, she wrote Hartnagel that “[t]o me, justice takes precedence over all other attachments.”<sup>71</sup> By 1942, Scholl connected herself to the injustices being done to

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<sup>68</sup> Sachs, *Volume II*, 2007 Update, ch. 37, pg 1.

<sup>69</sup> “Leaflet of the White Rose III.,” *Leaflets of the White Rose*.

<sup>70</sup> Scholl to Hartnagel, May 29, 1940, in *Heart of the White Rose*, 69.

<sup>71</sup> Scholl to Hartnagel, September 23, 1940, in *Heart of the White Rose*, 93.

others: “How can I be happy, knowing that fellow creatures of mine are unhappy?”<sup>72</sup> Throughout these two years, Scholl developed into a person who did not only recognize injustice, but who could not happily live with the injustices being committed to her fellowman. This moral duty towards others compelled her to act, regardless of the consequences.

By late-summer 1942, Scholl began discussing her death. She wrote in her diary, “Mustn’t we all, no matter what age we live in, be permanently prepared for God to call us to account from one moment to the next? How am I to know if I shall still be alive tomorrow? We could all be wiped out overnight by a bomb, and my guilt would be no less than if I perished in company with the earth and stars.”<sup>73</sup> By this time, Scholl participated in the creation of leaflets, and her musings on death therefore can be read as an acknowledgement of the likely outcome of her resistance. By living each day like her last, Scholl did not create an abundance of guilt for things left undone. Her discussions of guilt thus seem to relate to her resistance, as death could happen any day if discovered. When arrested, Scholl was asked if she regretted her actions. Her response affirmed her commitment to both her resistance actions and her willingness to die for them: “From my point of view, I must answer no. Now as before, I believe I have done the best that I could for my nation. I therefore do not regret my conduct. I wish to take upon myself the consequences of my actions.”<sup>74</sup> The last portion of this statement exemplifies Scholl’s dedication; she acted on her moral convictions, doing what she thought was best for her nation. As a result was fully prepared to accept the consequences—her death.

Hans Scholl expressed a similar moral need to act against the regime. Scholl explained that he felt compelled “not to be ambivalent about the fate of my nation,” so he “resolved to show my convictions in deed, not just in thought.” More significantly, he stated, “When I first

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<sup>72</sup> Scholl to Otl Aicher, October 9, 1942, in *Heart of the White Rose*, 248.

<sup>73</sup> Sophie Scholl, diary entry, August 9, 1942, in *Heart of the White Rose*, 210.

<sup>74</sup> “Sophie Scholl Third Interrogation, February 20, 1943” in *Gestapo Interrogation Transcripts: ZC 13267*, 177.

decided to produce and distribute leaflets, it was obvious to me that such conduct was in opposition to the current regime...I was convinced that I must act on my inner convictions. I believed that this inner duty was greater than the oath that I had sworn as a soldier. I knew what I took upon myself and I was prepared to lose my life by doing so.”<sup>75</sup> Here, Hans highlighted the importance of his inner duty over any duty to the army. In addition, this statement demonstrated his understanding of the illegality of his actions and his disregard for that illegality. He acted on his “inner convictions” and his preparedness to “lose my life by doing so” demonstrates the extent of his dedication to that moral duty.

Scholl did not only discuss an acceptance of death after his arrest, when he would have already known that an execution was eminent; he wrote about it in the days leading up to his arrest, illustrating how his acceptance of death was not simply in the face of death, but as a part of his inner duty. In a letter to one of his girlfriends, Scholl wrote:

Never has my respect for your purity of heart been greater than it is now, when life has become an ever present danger. But because the danger is of my own choosing, I must head for my chosen destination freely and without ties. I've gone astray many times, I know. Chasms yawn and darkest night envelops my questioning heart, but I press on regardless. As Claudel so splendidly puts it: *La vie, c'est une grande aventure vers la lumiere.*<sup>76</sup>

Scholars such as Sachs suggest that the members of the White Rose knew they would be arrested shortly by mid-February 1943, and if this statement does not prove that, it at the very least demonstrates how willing Scholl was to die for his cause. His “destination” seems surely to mean his death, which he pushed himself towards regardless of a “questioning heart.” The last sentence translates into: “Life, it’s a great trip towards the light” and affirms the notion by this point in his

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<sup>75</sup> “Hans Scholl, First Interrogation, February 18, 1943,” in *Gestapo Interrogation Transcripts: ZC 13267*, 124.

<sup>76</sup> Scholl to Rose Nagele, February 16, 1943, in *Heart of the White Rose*, 279.

life, Hans had accepted his impending death as just a result of his more important resistance actions.<sup>77</sup>

Schmorell also exhibited a moral conviction against the Nazi regime. He explained to his friend Lilo Ramdohr that “Hitler may have pronounced Jews racially inferior, but Alex asserted that Hitler was *ethically* inferior.”<sup>78</sup> Though he does not here specifically state an inner duty by name, Schmorell’s ethical conflict with Hitler and the regime is evident. He explained it in more detail during his interrogation: “[W]e clearly knew that the publication of treasonous flyers represented an action against the National Socialist regime, which would lead to the harshest possible punishment should we be discovered. I was not unaware of what I did, but rather I counted on losing my life should I be discovered. I simply disregarded all of that, because my inner duty to act against the National Socialist regime took precedence.”<sup>79</sup> Like other members of the White Rose, Schmorell articulated their knowledge of the consequences—“I counted on losing my life.” His “inner duty” to rebel against the Nazi regime proved more important than possibly losing his life. He reiterated the importance of his moral duty in what Dumbach and Newborn cite in text as a letter to his parents before his execution: “I’m going with the awareness that I followed the deepest convictions and the truth. This allows me to meet my hour of death with a conscience at peace.”<sup>80</sup> Schmorell was not simply motivated by moral convictions, but rather he was able to accept his death because he attempted to fulfill them. Like the other members, he demonstrated how one of his primary motivations to resist was his inner

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<sup>77</sup>Translated by author.

<sup>78</sup> Lilo Fürst-Ramdohr, *Freundschaften in der Weißen Rose [Friendship in the White Rose]* (Munich: Verlag Geschichtswerkstatt Neuhausen, 1995), 18-9, cited in Sachs, *Volume I*, ch. 27 pg. 2.

<sup>79</sup> “Continuation of Interrogation, February 26, 1943,” in *Gestapo Interrogation Transcripts: RGWA1361K-I-8808*, 18.

<sup>80</sup>Dumbach and Newborn, *Shattering the German Night*, 232

duty against the immorality of the regime, and that that duty was so important it was worth dying for.

Though there is not as direct of statements by Graf available on this topic as the Scholls and Schmorell, there is still evidence that he felt just as morally compelled to act.<sup>81</sup> Sachs quotes Anneliese Graf about her brother's inner duty: "He [Willi] translated the imperative '*Someone has to do something against the regime*' into 'I must do something.'" <sup>82</sup> Though not directly Graf's words, this statement demonstrates how he felt personally compelled to act against National Socialism. Sachs again cites Graf's sisters in a statement that reflects his acknowledgement of the consequences of resistance: "According to both Mathilde and Anneliese, Willi became very agitated, eventually clearly stating that someone had to give a visible sign against Nazi tyranny. Even if it 'cost him his head.'" <sup>83</sup> From these secondhand accounts, it can be inferred that Graf, like the rest of the White Rose, fully understood the consequences of resistance, but was willing to risk his life in order to fight such an immoral regime.

Lastly, Huber in his interrogation expressed a similar inner duty that outweighed the consequences of his actions. He expressed a lack of regret: "I knew that my actions...represented an action against the current regime. I was also conscious of the fact that in an investigation, I would have to reckon with the severest punishment. Nevertheless, I took the risk, firmly convinced that there was no other way to remedy the terrible damages the German government

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<sup>81</sup> In contrast to the Scholls, Schmorell, and Huber, Graf spent most of his interrogation denying his actions or attempting to minimize them as the result of Hans Scholl's influence; *Gestapo Interrogation Transcripts: Willi Graf, Alexander Schmorell, Hans Scholl, and Sophie Scholl, NJ1704, vol.1-33*, trans. Ruth Sachs (Los Angeles: Exclamation! Publishers, 2002).

<sup>82</sup> Anneliese Knoop-Graf, "...er übertrug mir das Vermächtnis, sein Andenken und Wollen aufrechtzuerhalten und weiterzutragen," undated, cited in Sachs, *Volume II*, ch. 23, pg. 1; though not stated, it is likely that the emphasis here was added by the author since she does so in other works.

<sup>83</sup> Annelisse Knoop-Graf and Inge Jens, eds., *Willi Graf: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* (Frankfurt am Main Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1994), 302, cited in Sachs, *Volume II*, ch. 27, pg. 7.



has suffered through the events of the last 4 years.”<sup>84</sup> Though Huber does not explicitly say “inner duty,” as some of his fellow resisters did, his statement reflects the same meaning. He risked his life because he was convinced there was “no other way” to end the regime—seemingly his version of an inner duty. Huber affirms, like the rest, that the risk of the “severest punishment” was worth the possibility of hurting the regime, or at the very least showing other Germans the failures of the regime. Ultimately, each member of the White Rose expressed some sort of personal, moral duty to resist the regime, making it one of their primary motives. In addition, the fact that they all largely saw death as a risk worth taking demonstrates how significantly the members were impacted by this sense of duty.

The members of the White Rose resistance group—Hans and Sophie Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, Willi Graf, Christoph Probst, and Kurt Huber—rebelled against the Nazi regime for moral reasons; most significantly, the group was compelled by a revulsion to the brutality of the Nazis in Poland and the Eastern front, disgust with the regime’s failures and disregard for human life at Stalingrad, the restrictions placed on personal rights, and a fundamental inner duty to resist. These motives culminated in the members’ lack of regret for their actions and acceptance of death as the outcome of their resistance. Their morally-driven motives and dedication to their cause makes the group worthy of study in the realm of resistance because it highlights that there were Germans who clashed with the Nazis on such an inherent level. Moreover, their motives likely caused their vast memorialization post-WWII.<sup>85</sup> The dedication and willingness to die of a group so young proves fascinating for many, including the author, as it demonstrates a heroic sense of morality. More importantly, the group’s morality provided Germans with something to latch onto as a ray of light in the darkness of Nazism, proving to themselves and the rest of the

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<sup>84</sup> “Kurt Huber Questionnaire and Interrogation, February 27, 1943,” in *Gestapo Interrogation Transcripts: NJ 1704*, 30.

<sup>85</sup> The Epilogue details the different ways the group has been memorialized.

world that Germans did not equivocally mean Nazis. Regardless of their complex personalities and the changing view of the group as time progresses, their morally-driven resistance will surely remain the defining factor in the study of the White Rose.

## Epilogue: Memorialization

Since the end of World War II, the White Rose has been extensively memorialized because, according in Katie Rickard, they “occupy a special position in German public memories of the Nazi past.”<sup>86</sup> The memorialization stems from Munich, where there are multiple memorials for the group. The entrance to the University is marked with two squares named after the resisters: *Geschwister-Scholl Platz* (Siblings Scholl Plaza) and *Professor-Huber-Platz* (Professor Huber Plaza). It also contains the White Rose pavement memorial, which consists of



**Figure 1.** The pavement memorial to the White Rose in Munich, Germany. Source: “White Rose Leaflets,” Holocaust Education & Archive Research Team, accessed April 21, 2014, <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/revolt/wrleaflets.html>

reproductions of their leaflets and short biographies of the members (fig. 1).<sup>87</sup> The University has a

museum dedicated to the White Rose: *DenkStätte Weiße Rose* (White Rose Memorial).

Additionally, there is a bronze relief of the group and Hamburg student Hans Leipelt as well as a bronze bust of Sophie Scholl,

dedicated in 2007. For the sixth anniversary of the White Rose, a marble sculpture of

<sup>86</sup> Katie Rickard, “Memorializing the White Rose Resistance Group in Post-War Germany,” in *Memorialization in Germany since 1945*, ed. Bill Niven and Chloe Paver (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 158.

<sup>87</sup> Maik Kopleck, *Munich 1933-1945*, trans. Adelheid Korpp (Berlin: Links Christoph Verlag, 2010), 38-9.

Sophie Scholl and plaque dedicated to all Second World War German resistors was installed at the Bavaria Walhalla Hall of Fame and Honour.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to these memorials, there have been multiple artistic representations of the White Rose. They began with the 1945 book *Six of Them (Es waren ihrer Sechs)* by Alfred Neumann. This novel started a trend followed by much of the memorialized work: the White Rose was part of “the archetypal struggle of good against evil.”<sup>89</sup> Beyond fictionalized books, there are multiple performance pieces commemorating the White Rose. For Example, Udo Zimmermann’s opera *Weisse Rose*, was first produced in 1967 then revised in 1986 to international success.<sup>90</sup> Lillian Garrett-Groag’s play *The White Rose* depicting the arrests, interrogations, trials and executions of the group debuted in 1991.<sup>91</sup> The artistic representations of the White Rose have most prominently consisted of films, including the 1982 film *The White Rose* and the 2005 Oscar nominated film *Sophie Scholl—The Final Days*.

Finally, the legacy of the White Rose remains in organizations dedicated to continuing their moral convictions. One such group is the White Rose Foundation, based in Munich. This organization works to put on exhibits and lectures in schools, universities, and libraries about the resistance and mission of the White Rose.<sup>92</sup> Likewise, the Center for White Rose Studies is “dedicated to preserving the memories of those who courageously opposed the crimes of National Socialism, using their lives and work as a springboard to address the issues of informed

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<sup>88</sup> Hans Leipelt was arrested and executed for distributing the White Rose leaflets; Rickard, “Memorializing the White Rose,” 159.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>90</sup> Roger Brunyate, “More than Cabaret: Berlin/Munich double-bill at Theatre Project,” Opera at Peabody [Institute of Johns Hopkins University], accessed April 19, 2014, <http://www.peabodyopera.org/essays/berlin03/>.

<sup>91</sup> Frank Rich, “Review/Theater; ‘White Rose’ and Good Germans,” *The New York Times*, October 30, 1991, accessed April 19, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/10/30/theater/review-theater-white-rose-and-good-germans.html>.

<sup>92</sup> George Wittenstein, “The White Rose: Questions and Reflections,” *Soundings* xxv, no. 31 (1994): 42.

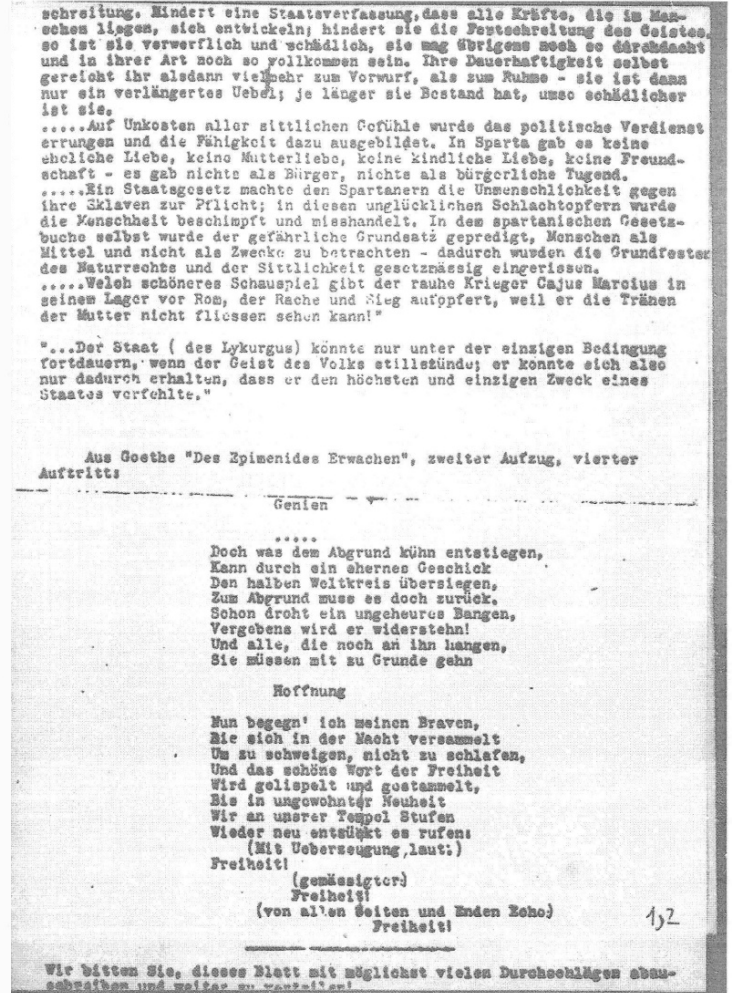
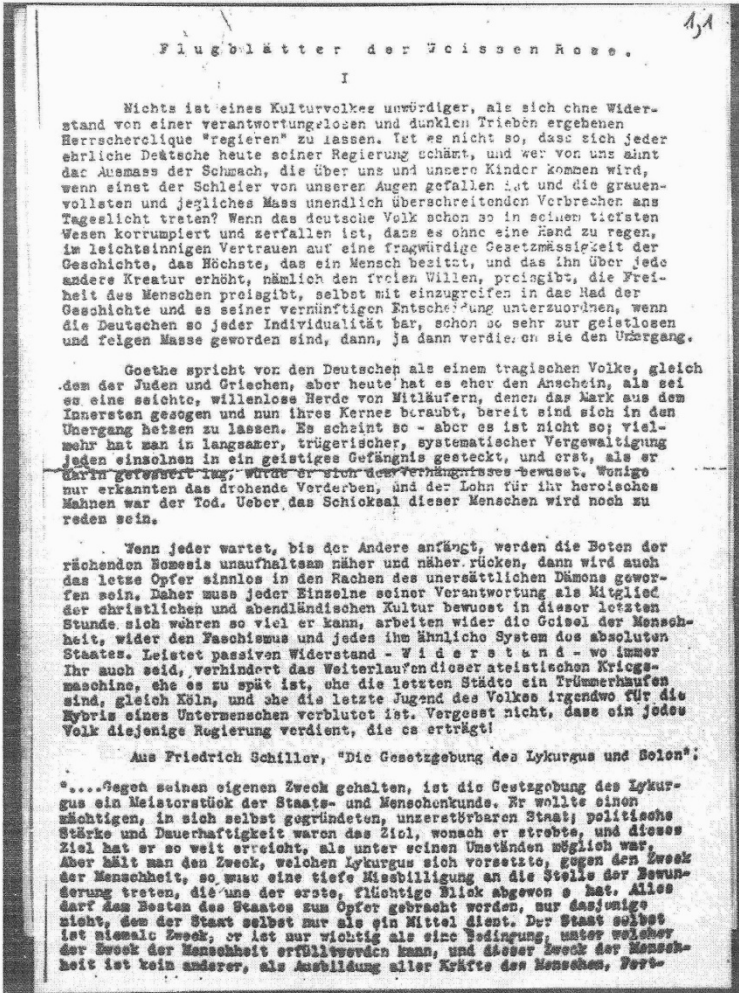
dissent in a civilized society.”<sup>93</sup> Both groups perpetuate the morality that defined the White Rose, and demonstrate that how it will continue to be a defining piece of White Rose scholarship.

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<sup>93</sup> “Mission Statement,” Center for White Rose Studies, accessed April 19, 2014, [http://www.white-rose-studies.org/Mission\\_Statement.html](http://www.white-rose-studies.org/Mission_Statement.html).

Appendix 1: The Leaflets

Leaflet I: Images of original leaflets



Source: White Rose pamphlets, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, microfiche. (All English transcriptions are by the author from Ruth Sachs' translation)

*Leaflet I: English translation*

*Leaflet of the White Rose*

*I.*

Nothing is more shameful to a civilized nation than to allow itself to be “governed” by an irresponsible clique of sovereigns who have given themselves over to dark urges – and that without resisting. Isn’t it true that every honest German is ashamed of his government these days? Who among us can imagine the degree of shame that will come upon us and upon our children when the veil falls from our faces and the awful crimes that infinitely exceed any human measure are exposed to the light of day? If the German nation is so corrupt and decadent in its innermost being that it is willing to surrender the greatest possession a man can own, a possession that elevates mankind above all other creatures, namely free will – if it is willing to surrender this without so much as raising a hand, rashly trusting a questionable lawful order of history; if it surrenders the freedom of mankind to intrude upon the wheel of history and subjugate it to his own rational decision if Germans are so devoid of individuality that they have become an unthinking and cowardly mob – then, yes, then they deserve their destruction.

Goethe speaks of the Germans as a tragic nation, like the Jews and the Greeks. But these days, Germans appear more like a shallow, irresolute herd of opportunists who have had all the marrow sucked from their bones. Now that they have been robbed of their essence, they are willing to be pursued to their destruction. This is how it appears, but it is not so. Rather, every individual has been jailed in an intellectual prison after having been slowly, deceptively, and systematically raped. Only as he lies there in chains is he aware of his doom. A few recognized the pending perdition [for what it was]. The reward for their heroic exhortations was death. There is more to say about the fate of these people.

If everyone waits till someone else makes a start, the messengers of the avenging Nemesis will draw incessantly closer. And then the last sacrifice will have been thrown senselessly into the jaws of the insatiable demon. Therefore in this last hour every individual must arm himself as best as he can, aware of his responsibility as a member of the Christian and western civilization. He must work against the hostage of humanity, against fascism and all similar systems of an absolute State. Offer passive resistance – *resistance*, wherever you may be, prevent the continuation of this atheistic war machine before it is too late, before the last of our cities lie in ruins like Cologne, and before the last of the youth of our people have been bled to death by the hubris of a subhuman. Do not forget that every nation deserves the government that it endures.

From Friedrich Schiller, “The Legislation of Lykurgus and Solon.”

“...When contrasted to its actual purpose, the legislation of Lykugus is a masterpiece of political science and anthropology. He wanted a powerful, indestructible State that was completely self-reliant. Political strength and permanence were his goals. He achieved this goal as much as was possible, given the circumstances. But if you compare the goals that Lykurgus had for himself with the goals of humanity, hearty disapproval replaces the amazement that had been one’s first impression of [Lykurgus’s accomplishment]. Everything may be sacrificed for the good of the nation, except for those things for which the State itself serves as a means. The State itself is never an end in itself, it is merely important as a condition under which humanity’s goals may be realized. And humanity’s goals are never anything other than development of all of mankind’s powers, or progress. IF the constitution of a nation denies development of all powers

of which mankind is capable; if it prevents the progress of the spirit, then it is reprehensible and injurious, no matter how well-thought-out and complete it may be in its own way. Its very permanence then becomes reproach instead of glory. It is nothing more than a prolonged evil. The longer it exists, the more injurious it becomes.

“...Political profits are then achieved at the expense of all moral emotions and all energies are dedicated to the end. In Sparta, there was no matrimonial love, no maternal love, no filial love, no friendship – there was nothing but citizens. There was no virtue but civic virtue.

“...Legislation turned inhumanity to slaves into duty. These unfortunate victims of war were cursed and abused by mankind. The legal codes of Sparta preached the dangerous principle that men are to be seen as means and not as ends – and in so doing, the very fundamental of natural law and morality was legally torn asunder.

“...In contrast, the rugged warrior Caius Marcius provides a far more pleasing spectacle in his encampment before Rome when he sacrificed vengeance and victory, because he could not bear to see the tears of a mother!

“...Lykurgus’s nation can endure under only one condition, namely that the spirit of the nation comes to a stand-still. In other words, he can only succeed when he misses the highest and only goal of national existence.”

From Goethe’s “The Awakening of Epimenides,” second act, fourth scene:

#### Spirits

That which has arisen bravely from the pit  
Can conquer half the globe  
With a pitiless destiny,  
But return it must to the abyss.  
Monstrous fears are threatening now,  
In vain will he resist!  
And all those who cling to him  
Will follow him to ruin.

#### Hope

Now I meet my good men  
Who have gathered in the night  
To keep silence, no to sleep.  
The lovely word of freedom  
is spoken lisping and stammering  
Until in unaccustomed newness  
We stand upon our temple steps  
And cry anew enraptured:  
(Loudly and with conviction)  
Freedom!  
(Moderately)  
Freedom!  
(Echoing from every side and corner)  
Freedom!

We ask that you copy this document, making as many carbon copies as possible, and pass it on!



Leaflet II: Images of original leaflets

Flugblätter der Weissen Rose 214

II

Man kann sich mit dem Nationalsozialismus zeitig 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 Kern war diese Bewegung auf den Betrug des Mitmenschen angewiesen, schon damals war sie im Innersten verfault und konnte sich nur durch die stete Hilfe retten. Schreibt doch Hitler selbst in einer frühen Auflage "seines" Buches (ein Buch, das in das Übelste Deutsch geschrieben worden ist, das ich je gelesen habe; denkoch 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 allzu sehr 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 Korruptionskur Macht kam, das Geschwür gleichsam aufbrach und der ganze Körper beunruhigt, versteckte sich die Mehrzahl der früheren Gegner, flüchtete die deutsche Intelligenz in ein Kellerloch, um dort als Nachschattengewächse, 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 Auserwählten Notwendigkeit seines Kampfes wider dieses System überzeugt ist. Wenn so eine Welle des Aufbruchs durch das Land geht, wenn "es in der Luft liegt", wenn viele mitmachen, dann kann in einer letzten, gewaltigen Anstrengung dieses System abgeschüttelt werden. Mit Ende mit Schrecken ist immer noch besser, als ein Schrecken ohne Ende.

Es ist uns nicht gegeben, ein endgültiges Urteil über den Sinn unserer Geschichte zu fällen. Aber wenn diese Katastrophe uns zum Heile dienen soll, so doch nur dadurch: Durch das Leid gereinigt zu werden, aus der tiefsten Nacht heraus das Licht zu ersehen, sich aufzuraffen und endlich mitschelfen, das Joch abzuschütteln, das die Welt bedrückt.

Nicht über die Judenfrage wollen wir in diesem Blatte schreiben, keine Verteidigungsrede verfassen - nein, nur als Beispiel wollen wir die Tatsache kurz anführen, die Tatsache, dass seit der Eroberung Polens dreihunderttausend Juden in diesem Land auf bestialischste Art ermordet worden sind. Hier sehen wir das furchterlichste Verbrechen in der Würde des Menschen, ein Verbrechen, dem sich kein Ähnliches in der ganzen Menschengeschichte an die Seite stellen kann. Auch die Juden sind doch Menschen - man mag sich zur Judenfrage stellen wie man will, und an Menschen würde solches verübt. Vielleicht sagt jemand, die Juden hätten ein solches Schicksal verdient; diese Behauptung wäre eine ungeheure Annahme; aber angenommen, es sagte jemand dies, wie stellt er sich dann zu der Tatsache, dass die gesamte polnische adelige Jugend vernichtet worden ist (Gute Gott, dass sie es noch nicht ist)? Auf welche Art, fragen sie, ist solches geschehen? Alle männlichen Sprösslinge aus adeligen Geschlechtern zwischen 15 und 20 Jahren wurden in Konzentrationslager nach Deutschland zu Zwangsarbeit, alle Mädchen gleichen Alters nach Norwegen in die Bordelle der SS verschleppt! Wozu wir dies Ihnen alles erzählen, da sie es schon selber wissen, wenn nicht diese, so andere gleich schwere Verbrechen des furchterlichen Untermenschentums? Weil hier eine Frage berührt wird, die uns alle zutiefst angeht und allen zu denken geben muss: Warum verhält sich das deutsche

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Volk angesichts all dieser schauspielerischsten, menschenunwürdigsten Verbrechen so apathisch? Kann irgendjemand rasch sich Gedanken darüber. Die Tatsache wird als solche hingesehen und ad acta gelegt. Und wieder schläft das deutsche Volk in seinem stumpfen, blöden Schlaf weiter und gibt diesen faschistischen Verbrechern Mut und Gelegenheit weitzukriechen - und diese tun es. Sollte dies ein Zeichen dafür sein, dass die Deutschen in ihren primitivsten menschlichen Gefühlen verroht sind, dass keine Salte in ihnen schrill aufschreit im Angesicht solcher Taten, dass sie in einem tödlichen Schlaf versunken sind, aus dem es kein Erwachen mehr gibt, nie, niemals? Es scheint so und ist es bestimmt, wenn die Deutsche nicht endlich aus dieser Dumpfheit aufwacht, wenn er nicht protestiert, wo immer er nur kann gegen diese Verbrecherklige, wenn er mit diesen Hunderttausenden von Opfern nicht mitleidet. Und nicht nur Mitleid muss er empfinden, nein, noch viel mehr: M i t a s h u l d. Denn er gibt durch sein apathisches Verhalten diesen dunklen Menschen erst die Möglichkeit so zu handeln, er leidet diese "Regierung", die eine so unendliche Schuld auf sich geladen konnte! Ein jeder will sich von einer solchen Mitschuld freisprechen, ein jeder tut es und schläft dann wieder mit ruhigstem, bestem Gewissen. Aber er kann sich nicht freisprechen, ein jeder ist s c h u l d i g, s c h u l d i g, s c h u l d i g! Doch ist es noch nicht zu spät, diese abscheulichste aller Misgeburten von Regierungen aus der Welt zu schaffen, um nicht noch mehr Schuld auf sich zu laden. Jetzt, da uns in den letzten Jahren die Augen vollkommen geöffnet worden sind, da wir wissen, mit wem wir es zu tun haben, jetzt ist es allerhöchste Zeit, diese braune Horde auszurotten. Bis zum Ausbruch des Krieges war der grösste Teil des deutschen Volkes geblendet, die Nationalsozialisten zeigten sich nicht in ihrer wahren Gestalt, doch jetzt, da man sie erkannt hat, muss es die einseitige höchste Pflicht, ja heiligste Pflicht eines jeden Deutschen sein, diese Bestien zu vertilgen!

"Der, der Verwaltung unauffällig ist, das Volk ist froh, der, der Verwaltung aufdringlich ist, das Volk ist gebrochen. Elend, ach, ist es, worauf Glück sich aufbaut. Glück, ach, verschleierte nur Elend. Wo soll das hinaus? Das Ende ist nicht abzusehen. Das Geordnete kehrt sich in Unordnung, das Gute wackelt sich in Schlechtes. Das Volk gerät in Verwirrung. Ist es nicht so täglich seit langem? Daher ist der Fehe Mensch rechteckig, aber er stützt nicht an, er ist kantig, aber verletzt nicht, er ist aufrecht, aber nicht schroff. Er ist klar, aber will nicht glänzen." Lao-tse.

Wer unternimmt, das Reich zu beherrschen, und es nach seiner Willkür zu gestalten; ich sehe ihn sein Ziel nicht erreichen; das ist alles. Das Reich ist ein lebendiger Organismus; es kann nicht gemacht werden, wahrlich! Wer daran machen will, verdirbt es, wer sich seiner bemächtigen will, verliert es. Daher: "Von dem Wesen gehen manche voraus, andere folgen ihnen; manche erlangen Hilfe, andere unterliegen." Der Hohe Mensch drückt ab von Uebertribenheit, lässt ab von Ueberhebung, lässt ab von Uebergriffen." Lao-tse.

Wir bitten diese Schrift mit möglichst vielen Durchschlägen abzuschriften und weiterzuverteilen.

Source: White Rose pamphlets, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, microfiche.

*Leaflet II: English translation*

*Leaflet of the White Rose*  
*II.*

It is impossible to come to terms with National Socialism on an intellectual basis, because it is simply not intellectual. You cannot speak of a National Socialist ideology, If such a thing existed, you would be forced to try to defend or engage it on an intellectual basis. Reality offers us a completely different image. When the movement was still in embryonic form, it relied on deception of its fellow man, Even then, it was rotten to the core and could preserve itself only on the basis of constant lies. Hitler himself wrote in an early edition of “his” book – a book that is written in the most awful German I have ever read, despite which the nation of poets and thinkers have elevated it to the status of the Bible: “you would not believe how one must deceive a nation in order to rule it.” IF this cancerous growth in the German nation was not too noticeable in the early phases, then that is because there were enough forces for good at work to try to slow its growth. But as it grew larger and larger and finally ascended to power by means of one last vulgar corruption, the abscess erupted and defied the whole body. This caused the majority of its previous opponents to hid themselves. German intelligentsia took refuge in holes in the cellar like *Solanacea*, hiding from light and the sun, gradually suffocating. And now we are facing the end. Now it is a question of mutually coming to our senses, of mutually keeping one another informed. We must always keep these things in mind and allow ourselves no rest until the last man is convinced of the utmost necessity of his battle against this system. If a wave of insurrection surges through the country, if “it is in the air,” if many join us, then this system can be cast aside with one last mighty effort. An end with terror is always better than terror without end.

It is not up to us to pass final judgment regarding the meaning of our history. But if this catastrophe shall be our sure salvation, then it shall be so: WE will be cleansed by suffering, we will long for the light from the midst of the blackest night, we will summon our energy and finally help shake of the yoke that oppresses the world.

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We do not wish to address the Jewish question in this leaflet, nor do we wish to pen a case for the defense. No – we would like to mention by way of example the fact that since Poland was conquered, *three hundred thousand* Jews have been murdered in that country in the most bestial manner imaginable. In this we see a terrible crime against the dignity of mankind, a crime that cannot be compared with any other in the history of mankind. Jews are human beings too = it makes no difference what your opinion is regarding the Jewish question – and these crimes are being committed against human beings. Perhaps someone will say, the Jews deserve this fate. Saying this is in itself a colossal effrontery. But let us assume that someone has said this. How can he face the fact that the entire population of aristocratic Polish youth has been exterminated (would God that the extermination is not yet complete!)? You may ask, and in what manner has this taken place? All male offspring of aristocratic families between 15 and 20 years old are sent to concentration camps in Germany as forced labor. All the girls of the same age group are being sent to the SS Brothels in Norway! But why are we bothering to tell you all this, since you know everything anyway? IF you are not aware of these specific crimes, then surely you are aware of equally heinous crimes committed by these terrible subhumans? Because this touches on a question that affects all of us deeply, a question that *must* make us all stop and think: Why is the German nation behaving so apathetically in the face of all these most

abominable, most degrading crimes? Hardly anyone even gives them a second thought. The facts are accepted as just that and filed away. And one more time, the German nation slumbers on in its indifferent and foolish sleep and gives these fascist criminals courage and opportunity to rage on – which of course they do. Is this a sign that the Germans have become brutalized in their most primitive human emotions? That no chord shrieks [in horror] in the face of such deeds? That they have fallen into such a fatal sleep out of which they will not awake, never, ever? It appears so. And it must *be* so if the German does not finally rise up from his numbness, if he does not protest wherever he possibly can against this clique of criminals, if he does not have pity on these hundreds of thousands who have been sacrificed. And he must not merely feel pity – no, much more. He must *share in the guilt*. It is his apathetic conduct that gives these sinister people the possibility to carry out their deeds. He tolerates this “government” that has incurred such infinite guilt. Yes, he is guilty himself that this government come could into existence! Each man wishes to be acquitted of his complicity – everyone does so, then lies back down in sleep with a calm, clear conscience. But he may not acquit himself. Everyone is *guilty, guilty, guilty!* But it is not too late to rid the world of this most awful of all miscarriages of government, in order to avoid incurring even more guilt. Those of us who have had our eyes completely opened in recent years since we know with whom we are dealing – it is high time for us to exterminate this brown horde. Until war broke out, the majority of the German people were hoodwinked. National Socialism did not show itself in its truest form. But now that we have recognized it for what it is, it must be the sole and primary duty of every German – indeed, our most holy duty – to annihilate this wild inhuman Beast!

“He whose administration is unobtrusive, his people are happy. He whose administration is meddlesome, his people are broke. Distress, oh!, that is what happiness is built upon. Happiness, oh!, masks distress. And what is the end of this? The end cannot be seen in its entirety. Order becomes disorder, good becomes bad. The nation becomes confused. Has it not been this way every day for a very long time?

That is why the Great Man is rectangular, but he does not injure, he is angular, but he does not wound; he is upright but not rough. He is transparent, but he does not glitter.” Lao-tse.

He who undertakes to rule a kingdom and forms it as he pleases, I do not see him achieving his goals. That is all.

The kingdom is a living organism. Verily, it cannot be fabricated! He who wishes to take it in hand will ruin it. He who wishes to usurp it will lose it.

Therefore: “Some creasutres lead, others follow them. Some are cold-blooded, others are warm-blooded. Some are strong, some are weak. Some attain wealth, others are overthrown.”

The Great Man therefore refrains from excesses, refrains from arrogance, refrains from infringements. Lao-tse.

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We request that you make as many carbon copies of this document as possible and pass it on.

Leaflet III: Images of original leaflet

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Flugblätter der Weissen Rose

III

"Salus publica suprema lex."

Alle idealen Staatsformen sind Utopien. Ein Staat kann nicht rein theoretisch konstruiert werden, sondern er muss ebenbürtig wachsen, reifen, wie der einzelne Mensch. Aber es ist nicht zu vergessen, dass am Anfang einer jeden Kultur die Vorform des Staates vorhanden war. Die Familie ist so alt, wie die Menschen selbst und aus dieser anfänglichen Zusammensein hat sich der vernunftüberabte Mensch einen Staat geschaffen, dessen Grund die Gerechtigkeit und dessen höchstes Gesetz das Wohl Aller sein soll. Der Staat soll eine Analogie der göttlichen Ordnung darstellen, und die höchste aller Utopien, die civitas Dei ist das Vorbild, dem er sich letzten Endes nähern soll. Wir wollen hier nicht urteilen über die verschiedenen möglichen Staatsformen, die Demokratie, die konstitutionelle Monarchie, das Königtum usw. Nur eines will eindeutig und klar herausgehoben werden: jeder einzelne Mensch hat einen Anspruch auf einen brauchbaren und gerechten Staat, der die Freiheit des Einzelnen als auch das Wohl der Gesamtheit, sichert. Denn der Mensch soll nach Gottes Willen frei und unabhängig im Zusammenleben und Zusammenwirken der staatlichen Gemeinschaft sein natürliches Ziel, sein irdisches Glück in Selbstständigkeit und Selbsttätigkeit zu erreichen suchen.

Unser heutiger "Staat" aber ist die Diktatur des Bösen. "Das wissen wir schon lange," höre ich mich sagen, "und wir haben es nicht nötig, dass uns dies hier noch einmal vorgehalten wird." Aber, frage ich Dich, wenn ihr das wisst, warum regt ihr euch nicht, warum duldet ihr, dass diese Gewalttäter Schritt für Schritt offen und im Verborgenen eine Domäne eures Rechtes nach der anderen rauben, bis einer Tages nichts, aber auch gar nichts übrigbleiben wird, als ein mechanisiertes Staatsgetriebe, kommandiert von Verbrechern und Säufnern? Ist euer Geist schon so sehr der Vergewaltigung unterlegen, dass ihr vergesst, dass es nicht nur euer Recht, sondern eure s i t t l i c h e P f l i c h t ist, dieses System zu beseitigen? Wenn aber ein Mensch nicht mehr die Kraft aufbringt, sein Recht zu fordern, dann muss er mit absoluter Notwendigkeit untergehen. Wir würden es verdienen, in alle Welt verstreut zu werden, wie der Staub vor dem Wind, wenn wir uns in dieser zwölften Stunde nicht aufrafften und endlich den Mut aufbrächten, der uns seither gefehlt hat. Verbergt nicht eure Feigheit unter dem Mantel der Klugheit! Denn mit jedem Tag, da ihr noch sägert, da ihr dieser Ausgeburt der Hölle nicht widersteht, wächst eure Schuld gleich einer parabolischen Kurve höher und immer höher.

Viele, vielleicht die meisten Leser dieser Blätter sind sich darüber nicht klar, wie sie einen Widerstand ausüben sollen. Sie sehen keine Möglichkeiten. Wir wollen versuchen Ihnen zu zeigen, dass ein jeder in der Lage ist, etwas beizutragen zum Sturz dieses Systems. Nicht durch individualistische Gegnerschaft, in der Art verbitterter Einsiedler, wird es möglich werden, den Boden für einen Sturz der "Regierung" tief zu machen oder gar den Umsturz möglichst bald herbeizuführen, sondern nur durch die Zusammenarbeit vieler Überzeugter, tatkräftiger Menschen, Menschen, die sich einig sind, mit welchen Mitteln sie ihr Ziel erreichen können. Wir haben keine reiche Auswahl an solchen Mitteln, nur ein einziges steht uns zur Verfügung - der p a s s i v e W i d e r s t a n d

32

Der Sinn und das Ziel des passiven Widerstandes ist, den Nationalsozialismus zu Fall zu bringen und in diesem Kampf ist vor keinem Weg, vor keiner Tat zurückzuschrecken, mögen sie auf Gebieten liegen, auf welchen sie auch wollen. An allen Stellen muss der Nationalsozialismus angegriffen werden, an denen er nur angreifbar ist. Ein Ende muss diesem Unstaut möglichst bald bereitet werden - ein Sieg des faschistischen Deutschland in diesem Kriege hätte unbeschreibliche, fürchterliche Folgen. Nicht der militärische Sieg über den Bolschewismus darf die erste Sorge für jeden Deutschen sein, sondern die Niederlage der Nationalsozialisten. Dies muss unbedingt an erster Stelle stehen. Die grössere Notwendigkeit dieser letzteren Forderung werden wir Ihnen in einem unserer nächsten Blätter beweisen.

Und jetzt muss sich ein jeder entschiedene Gegner des Nationalsozialismus die Frage vorlegen: Wie kann er gegen den gegenwärtigen "Staat" am wirksamsten ankämpfen, wie ihm die empfindlichsten Schläge beibringen? Durch den passiven Widerstand - zweifellos. Es ist klar, dass wir unmöglich für jeden Einzelnen Richtlinien für sein Verhalten geben können, nur allgemein andeuten können wir, den Weg zur Verwirklichung muss jeder selber finden.

S a b o t a g e n in Rüstungs- und kriegswichtigen Betrieben, Sabotage in allen Versammlungen, Kundgebungen, Feiertagen, Organisationen, die durch die nat. soz. Partei ins Leben gerufen werden, Verhinderung des reibungslosen Ablaufs der Kriegsmaschine (einer Maschine, die nur für einen Krieg arbeitet, der a l l e i n um die Rettung und Erhaltung der nat. soz. Partei und ihrer Diktatur geht). S a b o t a g e n auf allen wissenschaftlichen und geistigen Gebieten, die für eine Fortführung des gegenwärtigen Krieges tätig sind - sei es in Universitäten, Hochschulen, Laboratorien, Forschungsanstalten, technischen Büros. S a b o t a g e n in allen Veranstaltungen kultureller Art, die das "Ansehen" der Faschisten im Volk heben könnten. S a b o t a g e n in allen Zweigen der bildenden Künste, die nur im geringsten im Zusammenhang mit dem Nationalsozialismus stehen und ihm dienen. S a b o t a g e n in allem Schrifttum, aller Zeitungen, die im Solde der "Regierung" stehen, für ihre Ideen, für die Verbreitung der braunen Lüge, kämpfen. Opfert nicht einen Pfennig bei Strassensammlungen (auch wenn sie unter dem Deckmantel wohltätiger Zwecke durchgeführt werden. Denn dies ist nur eine Tarnung. In Wirklichkeit kommt das Ergebnis weder dem Roten Kreuz noch den Notleidenden zugute. Die Regierung braucht das Geld nicht, ist auf diese Sammlungen finanziell nicht angewiesen - die Druckmaschinen laufen ja ununterbrochen und stellen jede beliebige Menge von Papiergeld her. Das Volk muss aber dauernd in Spannung gehalten werden, nie darf der Druck der Kantare nachlassen! Gebt nichts für die Metall- Spinnstoff- und andere Sammlungen! Sucht alle Bekannte auch aus den unteren Volksschichten, von der Sinnlosigkeit einer Fortführung, von der Aussichtslosigkeit dieses Krieges, von der geistigen und wirtschaftlichen Versklavung durch den Nationalsozialismus, von der Zersetzung aller sittlichen und religiösen Werte zu überzeugen und zum p a s s i v e n W i d e r s t a n d zu veranlassen!

Aristoteles "Über die Politik": "....."Ferner gehört es (zum Tode der Tyrannis) dahin zu streben, dass ja nichts vorübergen bleibe, was irgend ein Untertan spricht oder tut, sondern überall Späher ihre Botschaften zu verfeinden und das Volk mit den Verhassten und die Reichen mit Freunden zu verfeinden und das Volk mit den Verhassten und die Reichen unter sich. Sodann gehört es zu solchen tyrannischen Massregeln, die Untertanen arm zu machen, damit die Leibwache besoldet werden kann, und sie, mit der Sorge um ihren täglichen Erwerb beschäftigt, keine Zeit und Masse haben, Verschwörungen anzustiften...."Ferner aber auch solche hohe Einkommensteuer, wie die in Syrakus auferlegten, dann unter solchen Umständen die Bürger dieses Status in fünf Jahren glücklich ihr ganzes Vermögen in Steuern ausgegeben. Und auch beständig Kriege zu erregen ist der Tyrann geneigt..."

Bitte vervielfältigen und weitergeben!!!

Source: White Rose pamphlets, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, microfiche.

*Leaflet III: English translation*

*Leaflet of the White Rose  
III.*

“*Salus publica suprema lex*”

All ideal forms of government are utopias. A State cannot be designed strictly theoretically. It must grow, mature, just as an individual person will. However, one may not forget that at the beginning of every civilization, a prototype of the form of government existed. The family is so old – old as mankind itself – that out of this initial communal being the logic-endowed man created a State whose foundation would be justice, whose greatest law the good of all. The State represents an analogy of the divine order. The greatest of all utopias – the *civitas Dei* – is the model it seeks to emulate. We do not wish to pass judgment on all the various forms of government: democracy, constitutional monarchy, monarchy, etc. However, one thing should be accentuated clearly and plainly: Every individual human being has the right to a useful and just State that guarantees the freedom of the individual as well as the common good. For mankind must be able to attain his natural goal – his temporal happiness – in self-reliance and autonomy. This pursuit of happiness should take place free and unencumbered in association and collaboration with the national community, in accordance with God’s will.

But our present State is a dictatorship of Evil. “We’ve known that for a long time, “ I can hear you say, “And it is not necessary for you to remind us of it once again.” So I ask you: Of you are aware of this, why do you not stir yourselves? Why do you permit this autocrat to rob you of one sphere of your rights after another, little by little, both overtly and in secret? One day there will be nothing left, nothing at all, except for a mechanized national engine that has been commandeered by criminals and drunks. Has your spirit been so devastated by rape that you forget that it is not only your right, but your *moral duty* to put an end to this system? If a person cannot even summon the strength to demand his rights, then there is nothing left for him but destruction. We will have deserved to be scattered to all corners of the globe, as dust before the wind, if we do not pull ourselves together in this eleventh hour and finally summon the courage that we have been lacking till now. Do not hide your cowardice under the cloak of cleverness! Because every day that you delay, every day that you do not resist this spawn of hell, your guilt is steadily increasing, like a parabolic curve.

Many, perhaps most of the readers of these leaflets are not certain how they can practice resistance. They do not see the possibility of so doing. We will attempt to show you that every person is in a position to contribute something to the overthrow of this system. It is impossible to lay the groundwork for the overthrow of this “government,” much less to effect its overthrow as soon as possible, if one opposes it alone in the manner of embittered loners. This can only be accomplished through the cooperative efforts of many unshakable, energetic people – people who are unified regarding the means necessary to achieve their goal. There are not a great many choices we have regarding the means to use; one and only one is our disposal – *passive resistance*.

The purpose and the goal of passive resistance is the overthrow of National Socialism. In this war, we may not be deterred from any course of action or from any deed, no matter what the scope. National Socialism must be attacked in *every* place in which it is vulnerable. This Un-State must be brought quickly to an end. If fascist Germany were to win this war, the consequences would be unfathomable and frightful. The first concern of every German should

not be a military victory over Bolshevism, but rather the defeat of National Socialists. The leaflets following this one will explain why the latter demand is of greater importance.

And now every resolute opponent of National Socialism must ask himself this question: How can he most effectively contend with the current “State”? How can he deal it the severest blow? Undoubtedly through passive resistance. Clearly, it is impossible for us to give every individual specific guidelines for his personal conduct. We can only allude to general issues. Everyone must find his own way to realize resistance.

*Sabotage* in armaments factories and other businesses vital to the war effort. *Sabotage* in all assemblies, rallies, festivities, organizations that were breathed into life by the National Socialist Party, prevention of the smooth operation of the war machine (a machine that operates only for one war, one that focuses on the preservation and maintenance of the National Socialist Party and its dictatorship). *Sabotage* in all scholarly and intellectual realms that exist for the continuance of the current war – this whether it be in universities, colleges, laboratories, research facilities, or technical offices. *Sabotage* at all cultural events that could possibly exalt the “prestige” of fascists among the people. *Sabotage* in all branches of the fine arts that have the least connection to National Socialism and serve its goal. *Sabotage* in all areas of literature, all newspapers that are on the payroll of the “government,” and that fight for their ideas, for the dissemination of the brown lie. Do not put even one penny in the collection plate, even if it is disguised as a charity. For this is merely camouflage. In reality, your gifts never make it to the coffers of either the Red Cross or the pockets of the destitute. The government does not need this money, it does not depend upon these collections. Its printing presses run uninterrupted and print any quantity whatever of paper money. But the nation must be kept constantly in harness. The pressure on the bridle bit never lets up. Donate nothing to the collections of metal, textiles, and other goods! Seek out all your acquaintances from among the lower classes of the people and seek to convince them of the senselessness of continuing the war, of the hopelessness of ever winning, tell them of the intellectual and economic enslavement by National Socialism, of the destruction of all moral and religious values. Prevail upon them to exercise *passive resistance!*

Aristotle in “About Politics”: “...In addition, a characteristic of a tyrant is that he seeks to keep anything from being hidden of that which a subject says or does. Everywhere, spies eavesdrop on the subject...He also seeks to incite the whole world against one another, to set friends on one another, to provoke the poor against the noble and the rich among themselves. Likewise, among the measures taken by a tyrant: He makes his subjects poor so he can pay his bodyguards. Once they are poor and must scabble for their daily bread, they will have neither time nor leisure to foster a conspiracy...In addition, a tyrant levies such high income taxes – as were levied in Syracuse – for under the rule of Dionysius, the citizens of that State happily spent their entire estates on taxes within five years. The tyrant also tends to provoke wars incessantly...”

Please duplicate and pass along!



Leaflet IV: Images of original leaflet

Flugblätter der Weissen Rose

IV

Es ist eine alte Weisheit, die man Kindern immer wieder aufs neue predigt, dass wer Nacht haben will, seinen Fuss. Ein kluges Kind wird sich aber die Finger nur einmal an heissen Ofen verbrannt.

In den vergangenen Wochen hatte Hitler sowohl in Afrika, als auch in Russland Erfolge zu verzeichnen. Die Folge davon war, dass der Optimismus auf der einen, die Bestürzung und der Pessimismus auf der anderen Seite des Volkes mit einer der Deutschen Trägheit unvergleichlichen Schnelligkeit anstieg. Allenthalben hörte man unter den Gegnern Hitlers, also unter dem besseren Teil des Volkes, Klagerufe, Worte der Enttäuschung und der Entmutigung, die nicht selten in dem Ausruf endigten: "Sollte nun Hitler doch...?"

Indessen ist der deutsche Angriff auf Ägypten zum Stillstand gekommen, Rommel muss in einer gefährlich exponierten Lage verharren - aber noch geht der Vormarsch im Osten weiter. Dieser scheinbare Erfolg ist unter den grübelhaftesten Opfern erkauft worden, sodass er schon nicht mehr als vorüberhaft bezeichnet werden kann. Wir warnen daher vor j e d e m Optimismus.

Wer hat die Toten geküßt, Hitler oder Gebbels - wohl keiner von beiden. Täglich fallen in Russland Tausende. Es ist die Zeit der Ernte, und der Schrotter führt mit voller Zug in die reife Saat. Die Trauer kehrt ein in die Hütten der Heimat, und niemand ist da, der die Tränen der Mütter trocknet. Hitler aber belüßt die, deren teuerstes Gut er geraubt und in den sinnlosen Tod getrieben hat.

Jedes Wort, das aus Hitlers Munde kommt, ist Lüge. Wenn er Frieden sagt, meint er den Krieg, und wenn er in freudigster Weise den Namen des Allmächtigen nennt, meint er die Macht des Bösen, den gefallenen Engel, den Satan. Sein Mund ist der stinkende Raucher der Hölle und seine Macht ist im Grunde verworfen. Wohl muss man mit rationalen Mitteln den Kampf wider den nationalsozialistischen Terrorstaat führen; wer aber heute noch an der realen Existenz der dämonischen Mächte zweifelt, hat den metaphysischen Hintergrund dieses Krieges bei weitem nicht begriffen. Hinter der dunklen, hinter dem sinnlich Wahrnehmbaren, hinter allen sachlichen logischen Überlegungen, steht das Irrationale, d. h. der Kampf wider den Dämon, wider den Boten des Antichrists. Überall und zu allen Zeiten haben die Dämonen im Dunkeln gelauert auf die Stunde, da der Mensch schwach wird, da er seine Ihm von Gott auf Freiheit gegründete Stellung in der Ordnung eigenmächtig verlässt, da er dem Druck des Bösen nachgibt, sich von den Mächten höherer Ordnung loslöst und so, nachdem er den ersten Schritt freiwillig getan, zum zweiten und dritten und immer mehr getrieben wird mit rasender stolgender Geschwindigkeit - überall und zu allen Zeiten der höchsten Not sind Menschen aufgestanden, Propheten, Heilige, die ihre Freiheit gewahrt hatten, die auf den Einzigen Gott hinwiesen und mit seiner Hilfe das Volk zur Umkehr wabten. Wohl ist der Mensch frei, aber er ist wahrlos wider das Böse ohne den wahren Gott, er ist wie ein Schiff ohne Ruder, dem Sturm preisgegeben, wie ein Säugling ohne Mutter, wie eine Wolke, die sich auflöst.

Gibt es, so trage ich Dich, der Du ein Christ bist, gibt es in dieser Hinsicht um die Erhaltung deiner höchsten Güter ein Zögern, ein Spiel mit Entzügen, ein Hinzuerschicken der Entscheidung in der Hoffnung, dass ein anderer die Waffen erhebt, um dich zu verteidigen? Hat Dir nicht Gott selbst die Kraft und den Mut gegeben? Wir n ü s s e n das Böse dort angreifen, wo es am mächtigsten ist, und es ist am mächtigsten in der Macht Hitlers.

4,2

"Ich wandte mich und sah an alles Unrecht, das geschah unter der Sonne; und siehe, da waren Tränen derer, so Unrecht litten und hatten keinen Tröster; und die ihnen Unrecht taten, waren so mächtig, dass sie keinen Tröster haben konnten. Da lobte ich die Toten, die schon gestorben waren, mehr denn die Lebendigen; die noch das Leben hatten..." (Sprüche)

Novalis: "Wahrhafte Anarchie ist das Zeugungselement der Religion. Aus der Vernichtung alles Positiven hebt sie ihr glorreiches Haupt als neue Weltstifterin empor... Wenn Europa wieder erwachen wollte, wenn ein Staat der Staaten, eine politische Wissenschaftslehre uns bevorstände! Sollte etwa die Hierarchie... das Prinzip des Staatsvereins sein?... Es wird solange Blut über Europa strömen, bis die Nationen ihren fürchterlichen Wahnsinn gewahr werden, der sie im Kreis herumtreibt, und von heiliger Musik getroffen und besänftigt, zu ehemaligen Altären in bunter Vermischung prieten, Werke des Friedens vornehmen und ein grosses Friedensfest auf der rauchenden Walstätten mit heissen Tränen gefeiert wird. Nur die Religion kann Europa wieder aufwecken und das Völkerrecht sichern und die Christenheit mit neuer Herrlichkeit sichtbar auf Erden in ihr friedensstiftendes Art installieren."

Wir weisen eindrücklich darauf hin, dass die Weisse Rose nicht im Solde einer ausländischen Macht steht. Obgleich wir wissen, dass die nationalsozialistische Macht nicht verwirrt werden kann, wollen wir eine Erneuerung des schwerverwundeten deutschen Geistes von Innen her zu erreichen. Dieser Wiedergeburt muss aber die klare Erkenntnis aller Schuld, die das deutsche Volk auf sich geladen hat, und ein rücksichtsloser Kampf gegen Hitler und seine allzuvielen Helfershelfer, Parteimitglieder, Quislinge usw. vorausgehen. Mit aller Brutalität muss die Kluft zwischen dem besseren Teil des Volkes und allem, was mit dem Nationalsozialismus zusammenhängt, aufgerissen werden. Für Hitler und seine Anhänger gibt es auf dieser Erde keine Strafe, die ihren Taten gerecht wäre. Aber aus Liebe zu kommenden Generationen muss nach Beendigung der Kriege ein Exempel statuiert werden, das niemand auch nur die geringste Lust je verspielen sollte, Ähnliches aufs neue zu versuchen. Vergesst auch nicht die kleinen Schurken dieses Systems, merkt Euch die Namen, auf dass keiner entkomme! Es soll ihnen nicht gelingen, in letzter Minute noch nach all diesen Schwauigkeiten die Fahne zu wechseln und so zu tun, als ob nichts gewesen wäre!

Zu Ihrer Beruhigung möchten wir noch hinzufügen, dass die Adressen der Leser der Weissen Rose nirgendwo schriftlich niedergelagt sind. Die Adressen sind willkürlich Adressbüchern entnommen.

Wir schweigen nicht, wir sind Euer böses Gewissen, die Weisse Rose lässt Euch keine Ruhe!

Bitte vervielfältigen und weitergeben!

Source: White Rose pamphlets, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, microfiche.

*Leaflet IV: English translation*

*Leaflet of the White Rose  
IV.*

There is an old proverb that children are always taught anew: Pay attention or pay the consequences. A smart child will only burn his fingers once on a hot stove.

In the past few weeks, Hitler has registered successes both in Africa and in Russia. As a result, optimism grew among the people on the one hand, while consternation and pessimism grew on the other hand – and this with a rapidity that is unrivalled [in a nation know for] inertia. On every side among the opponents of Hitler – that is, among the better part of the nation – one heard plaintive calls, words of disappointment and discouragement, which often ended with the exclamation: “But what if Hitler really...?”

In the meantime, the German offensive in Egypt has ground to a halt. Rommel must hold out in a dangerously exposed position. And yet the march eastward continues. This apparent success has been at the expense of the most ghastly sacrifices, so that it can no longer be described as advantageous. We therefore must warn against *every form of optimism*.

Who has counted the dead, Hitler or Goebbels? Probably neither. Thousands fall every day in Russia. It is the time of harvest, and the reaper approaches the standing crops with all his energy. Mourning returns to the cottages of the homeland and no one is there to dry the tears of the mothers. But Hitler deceives the ones whose most precious possession he has stolen and driven to a senseless death.

Every word that proceeds from Hitler’s mouth is a lie. When he says peace, he means war. And when he names the name of the Almighty in a most blasphemous manner, he means the almighty evil one, that fallen angel, Satan. His mouth is the stinking maw of hell and his might is fundamentally reprobate. To be sure, one must wage the battle against National Socialism using rational means. But whoever still does not believe in the actual existence of demonic powers has not comprehended by far the metaphysical background of this war. Behind the tangible, behind that which can be perceived by the senses, behind all factual, logical considerations stands The Irrational, that is the battle against the demon, against messengers of the Anti—Christ. Everywhere and at all times, the demons have waited in darkness for the hour in which mankind is weak; in which he voluntarily abandons the position in the world order that is based on freedom and comes from God; in which he yields to the force of the Evil One, disengaging himself from the powers of a higher order. Once he has taken the first step of his own free will, he is driven to take the second and then the third and even more with furiously increasing speed. Everywhere and at every time of greatest danger, people have risen up – prophets, saints – who are aware of their freedom, who have pointed to the One God and with His aid have exhorted the people to turn in repentance. Mankind is surely free, but he is defenseless against the Evil One without the true God. He is like a ship without a rudder that is given over to the storm, like a nursing child with a mother, like a cloud that dissolves.

I will ask you, those of you who claim to be Christians: In this struggle for the preservation of your most precious goods, is there a hesitancy, a pretense of intrigue, procrastination of your decision in the hopes that someone else will raise his weapons to defend you? Did not God Himself give you the strength and the courage to fight against [these powers]? We *must* attack the Evil One where it is strongest, and it is strongest in the power of Hitler.



“So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold, the tears of such as ere oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter.

“Wherefore, I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.” (Proverbs) [sic]

Novalis: “True anarchy is the element of procreation for religion. When everything positive has been destroyed, religion raises its glorious head as the benefactor of a new world...If Europe will awaken, if it will become a nation of nations, then a new political science would be at hand! Should perhaps hierarchy...be the principle for a union of nations...Blood will pour over Europe until the nations are aware of their terrible insanity that drives them around and around in circles. Then touched and soothed by holy music, they approach their former altars in the beauty of diversity, taking up works of peace, and tearfully celebrating a great festival of peace on the smoking battlefields. Religion alone can revive Europe and secure the rights of nations and install Christianity in its peace-giving office visibly on this earth with new glory.”

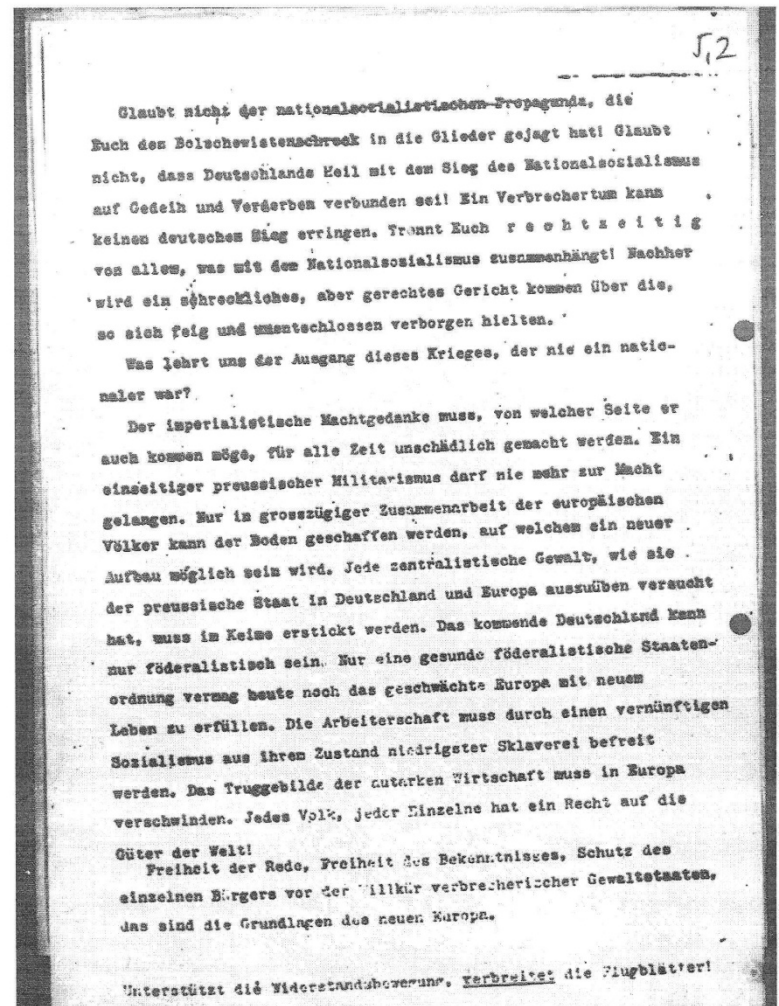
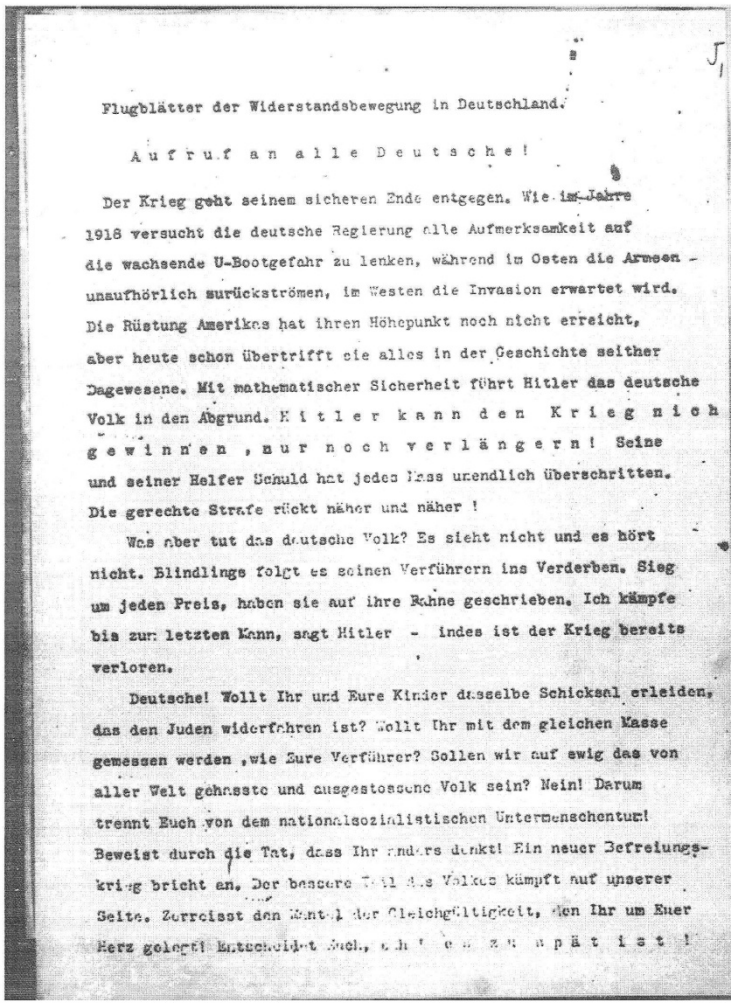
We expressly state that the White Rose is not a hireling of a foreign power. Though we are aware that the might of National Socialism must be broken militarily, we seek to achieve a revival of the deeply wounded German spirit from within. However, this rebirth must be preceded by a clear confession of all the guilt the German nation has incurred and by a ruthless battle against Hitler and his too-numerous helpers' helpers, Party members, Quislings, et al. The chasm between the better part of the nation and everything connected with National Socialism must be brutally forced open. There is no punishment on this earth that is adequate for the deeds of Hitler and his followers. Out of love for the generations to come, we must make an example [of them] after the conclusion of the war so that no one will ever have the slightest desire to attempt something similar. Do not forget even the little scoundrels of this regime. Note their names, so that no one escapes! After all these atrocities, they should not be able to change sides at the last minute and thereby pretend as though nothing had happened!

For your reassurance we will add that the addresses of the readers of the White Rose have not been documented in writing anywhere. The addresses were chosen at random from address books.

We will not keep silent. We are your guilty conscience. The White Rose will not let you alone!

Please duplicate and pass it on!

## Leaflet V: Images of original leaflet



Source: White Rose pamphlets, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, microfiche.

*Leaflet V: English translation*

*Leaflets of the Resistance Movement in Germany.  
Call to all Germans!*

The war is coming to its certain end. Just as in 1918, the German government is trying to draw attention to the growing submarine danger, while in the East the armies endlessly retreat and an invasion is expected in the West. America's mobilization has not even reached its zenith, yet even now it surpasses anything that has gone before in history. With mathematical certainty, Hitler is leading the German nation to disaster. *Hitler cannot win the war, he can only prolong it!* His guilt and the guilt of his assistants have infinitely exceed all measure. A Just punishment grows ever closer!

And what is the German nation doing? It sees nothing, it hears nothing. IT is blindly following its seducers to destruction. Victory at any price, that is what they have written on their flags. I will fight to the last man, says Hitler, but yet the war is already lost.

Germans! Do you and your children wish to suffer the same fate as the Jews?? Do you wish to be measured with the same measure as your seducers? Shall we forever be the most hated and rejected nation in all the world? No! Therefore, separate yourselves from the National Socialist subhumanity! Prove with your deeds that you think differently! A new War of Independence is beginning. The better part of the nation is fighting with us. Rend the cloak of apathy that you have wrapped around your hearts! Make up your mind, *before it is too late!*

Do not believe the National Socialist propaganda that has driven the fear of Bolshevism into your very being! DO not believe that Germany's salvation is wed to a victory of National Socialism for better or for worse! A band of criminals cannot attain a German victory. Separate yourselves from everything connected to National Socialism *while you still have time!* Later, all those who hid themselves cowardly and undecided will have to stand before a terrible and just court of law.

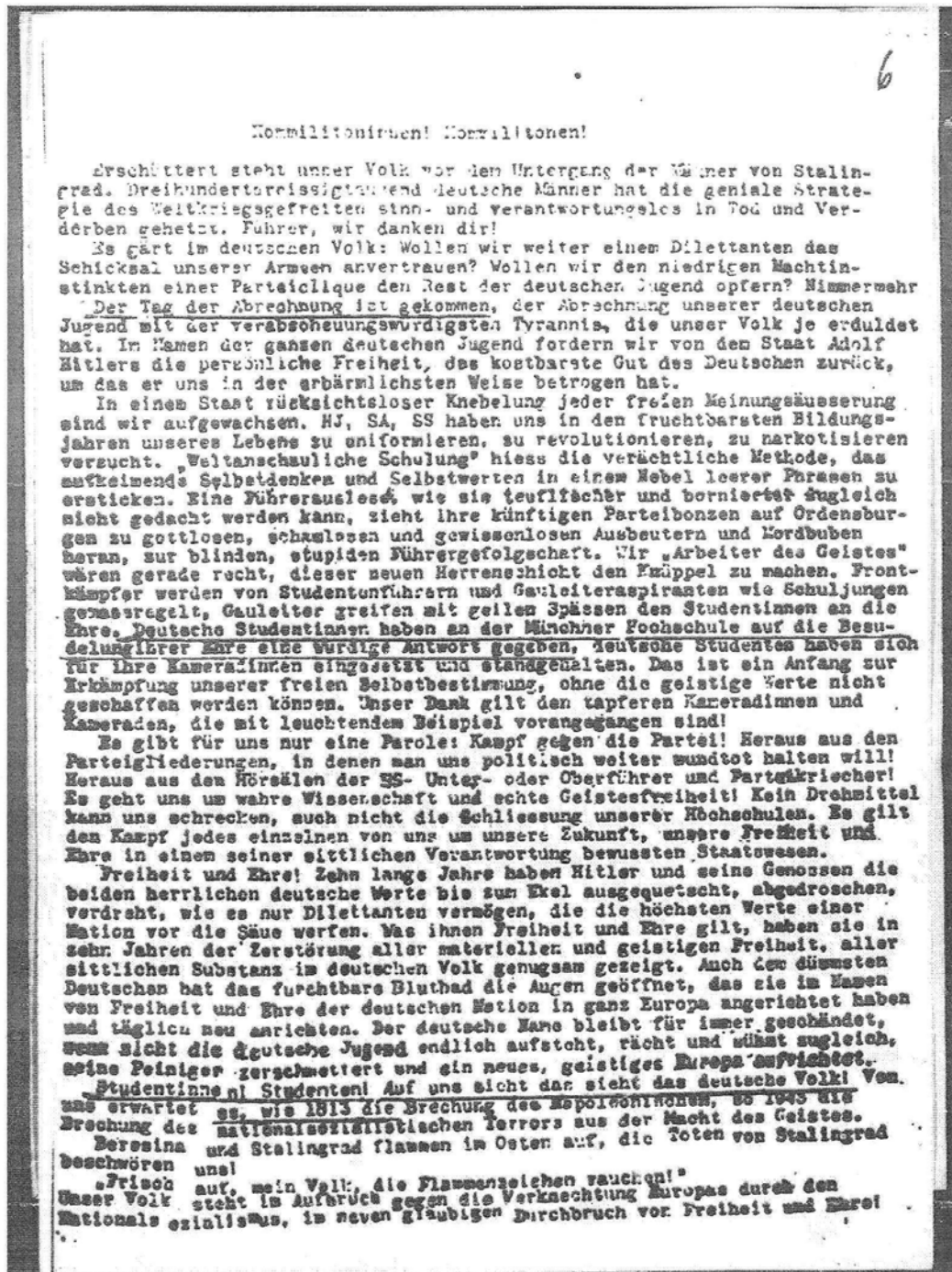
What can we learn from the outcome of this war, which was never a national war?

The imperialistic notions of power must be forever rendered harmless, regardless of which side they come from. A one-sided Prussian militarism shall nevermore come to power. The groundwork for reconstruction can only be created in a liberal cooperative effort of European nations. Every centralized power, such as that which the Prussian state has attempted to exert over Germany and Europe, must be nipped in the bud. The Germany of the future must be a federalist state. Only a healthy federalist form of government will be able to breathe new life into a weakened Europe. The working class must be liberated from their menial slavery through a practical form of socialism. The illusion of a self-sufficient economy must disappear from the face of Europe. Every nation, every individual has a right to the goods of the world!

Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the protection of the individual citizen from the caprice of criminal, violent States – these are the bases of the new Europe.

Support the resistance movement, disseminate the leaflets!

## Leaflet VI: Image of original leaflet



Source: White Rose pamphlets, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, microfiche.

*Leaflet VI: English translation*

*German Students!*

Our nation stands shaken before the demise of the heroes of Stalingrad. The brilliant strategy of a Lance Corporal from the World War has senselessly and irresponsibly driven three hundred thirty thousand German men to death and destruction. Führer, we thank you!

Unrest ferments among the German people: Shall we continue to entrust the fate of our armies to a dilettante? DO we wish to sacrifice the remainder of our German youth to the vile instinct for power of a Party clique? On no account!

The day of reckoning has come, the reckoning of our German youth with the most abominable tyranny that our nation has ever endured. In the name of all the German youth, we demand that Adolf Hitler's government return to us our personal freedom, the most valuable possession a German owns. He has cheated us of it in a most contemptible manner.

We have grown up in a nation where every open expression of opinion is callously bludgeoned. Hitler Youth, the SA and SS have tried to conform, revolutionize, and anesthetize us in the most fruitful years of our educational lives. The despicable methodology was called "ideological education"; it attempted to suffocate budding independent thought and values in a fog of empty phrases. "The Führer's pick" – something more simultaneously devilish and stupid could not be imagined.

This "Führer's pick" raises its future Party bosses in *Ordensburgen* so they will be godless, brazen, and conscienceless users and assassins, blind, stupid disciples of the Führer. We "Workers of the Spirit" would do well if we bludgeoned this new class of men. An intellectual and moral elite of student leaders and *Gauleiter* hopefuls distract us systematically from every disciplined, deep course of study. They seek to fritter away our time with roll-calls, Party gatherings, and trade association conferences. Soldiers who have fought on the front lines are reprimanded like schoolboys by these gentlemen. The *Gaulietier* and student leaders insult the honor of female students with lascivious jokes.

German female students at the college in Munich have given a dignified answer to the besmirching of their honor. German male students have gone into action on behalf of their female comrades and stood firm. This is a beginning in the fight for our free self-determination; without this, intellectual values can never be created. Thank you to all the brave comrades who have led the way with such an illuminated example!

For us now there is but one watchword: Fight against the Party! Get out of the Party organizations in which they wish to keep us politically muzzled! Get out of the lecture halls of the SS-Noncom-or-Major-Generals and the Party sycophants! This has to do with genuine scholarship and true freedom of thought! No threats can dismay us, not even the closing of our colleges. This is a battle that we all must fight for our future, our freedom and honor in a political system that is conscious of its moral responsibility.

Freedom and honor! For ten long years, Hitler and his associates have abused, stomped, and twisted these two glorious German words till they are loathsome. Only dilettantes are capable of doing this, dilettantes who cast the highest values of a nation before swine. Over the last ten years, they have more than shown us what freedom and honor means to them – they have destroyed all material and intellectual freedom and all moral substance in the German people. The terrible blood bath that they have caused in all of Europe in the name of the freedom and honor of the German people – a blood bath that they cause anew every day – has opened the eyes of even the stupidest German.

The German name will be forever defamed if German youth does not finally arise, avenge, and atone, if he does not shatter his tormentor and raise up a new intellectual Europe. Students! The German nation looks to us! In 1943, they expect from us the breaking of the National Socialist terror through the power of the spirit, just as in 1813 the Napoleonic [terror] was broken. Beresina and Stalingrad are going up in flames in the East, and the dead of Stalingrad beseech us: "Courage, my people! The beacons are burning!" Our nation is awakening against the enslavement of Europe by National Socialism, in a new pious revival of freedom and honor!

*Leaflet VII: English translation*

Stalingrad!

200,000 German brothers were sacrificed for the prestige of a militaristic imposter. The human conditions of surrender set down by the Russians were hidden from the soldiers who were sacrificed. For this mass murder, General Paulus received the Pak Leaves [decoration]. High-ranking officers escaped for the slaughter in Stalingrad by airplane. Hitler refused to allow those who were entrapped and surround to retreat to the troops behind the line. Now the blood of 200,000 soldiers who were doomed to death accuses the murderer named Hitler.

Tripoli! They surrendered unconditionally to the 8<sup>th</sup> English Army. And what did the English do? They allowed the citizens to continue living their lives as usual. They even let police and bureaucrats remain in office. Only one thing did they undertake to do thoroughly: They cleansed the great Italian colonial city of every false ringleader and subhuman. The annihilating, overwhelming super-power is approaching on every side with dead certainty. Hitler is less likely than Paulus to capitulate. There would be no escape for him. And will you be deceived as were the 200,000 who defended Stalingrad in a losing cause, so that you will be massacred, sterilized, or robbed of your children?

Roosevelt, the most powerful man in the world, said in Casablanca on January 26, 1943: Our war of extermination is not against the people, but against the political systems. We will fight for an unconditional surrender. More contemplation may be needed before a decision can be made. This is about the lives of millions of people. Should Germany meet the same fate as Tripoli?

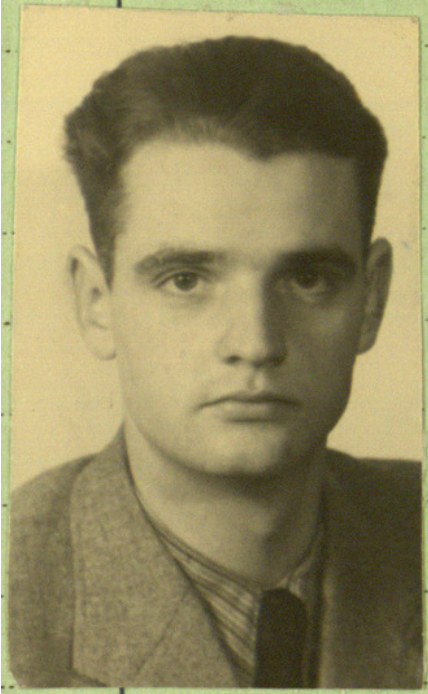
Today, all of Germany is encircled just as Stalingrad was. All Germans shall be sacrificed to the emissaries of hate and extermination. Sacrificed to him who tormented the Jews, eradicated half of the Poles, and who wishes to destroy Russia. Sacrificed to him who took from you freedom, peace, domestic happiness, hope, and gaiety, and gave you inflationary money. That shall not, that may not come to pass! Hitler and his regime must fall so that Germany may live. Make up your minds: Stalingrad and destruction, or Tripoli and a future of hope. And when you have decided, act.



Appendix 2: Images of Members



Sophie Scholl



Hans Scholl



Christoph Probst



Kurt Huber



Alexander Schmorell



Willi Graf

Source: “70 years ago – Remembering the White Rose,” Ludwige-Maximilians-Universität-München, accessed April 21, 2014, [http://www.en.uni-muenchen.de/news/newsarchiv/bildergalerie/weisse\\_rose/index.html](http://www.en.uni-muenchen.de/news/newsarchiv/bildergalerie/weisse_rose/index.html)

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