

## The White Rose Resistance Movement & The Analysis of Their Six Leaflets

By Jessica Lewis

I have neither given or received nor have I tolerated others use of unauthorized aid.

### **Abstract**

The story of the White Rose resistance movement is not generally known in the narrative of Nazi Germany, it falls within the many other resistance movements that appeared to be more effective than the White Rose. Yet, many scholars overlook that the leaflets the White Rose wrote played a role in the resistance to the Nazi government. My paper addresses the White Rose resistance movement during the Third Reich and how their resistance was exemplified in their leaflets through their discussion about belief in God and hope for a better Germany. In my paper I will do a literary analysis of the six White Rose leaflets to highlight Christian religious themes. I will examine how the religious language in the leaflets articulates the political goals of the White Rose movement and creates a call to action for Germans. Closely examining the leaflets and understanding the members of the White Rose that the wrote them sheds new light on the rarely acknowledged works of the White Rose resistance movement.

### **Introduction**

Political persuasion often comes with religious undertones. The story of the Third Reich is an example of this phenomenon. In the face of the devastation wrought by World War I and the penalties against Germany issued in the Treaty of Versailles, Germans struggled to rebuild their lives and their country. The Treaty threatened to divide the German people, creating conditions of poverty and large-scale starvation particularly for some marginalized groups like the Jews. Hitler convinced the people of Germany that his task to create, a “better Germany” was provided by God. In response to these socio-economic, political, and religious pressures, Adolf

Hitler presented a model of governance that led many Germans to believe that they, as a nation, could once again be great.

Yet, not everyone agreed with Hitler's ideology or his Hitler's rise to power. The White Rose emerged in resistance to Hitler, hoping to counter Hitler's ideology by explaining that the goals for Germany should be centered in Christ and should be about freeing its people, not oppressing them. The White Rose published a series of pamphlets to mobilize the public against Hitler, raising the question: To what extent did the White Rose use religious language and themes to achieve its political aspirations? The White Rose wrote sixth leaflets with the ideological combinations of Christianity and Nazism to politically inform Germans of what was truly occurring in Germany and what they felt Germans should do about it.

The atrocities that occurred during the Nazi era went unnoticed for only a few years until the men began to return from the war at the frontlines, such as Russia, and word began to spread. All of the promises that Hitler made were to improve Germany's economic situation and improve the overall value of life. For example in a letter to Inge Scholl, the sibling of two members of the White Rose, Hans and Sophie. "Only when you're compelled to wonder if the Fatherland still means as much as it may once have done-- only when you've lost all faith in banners and speeches because prevailing ideas have become trite and worthless--does true idealism assert itself."<sup>1</sup> Hans's belief in the Fatherland, Germany, began to dissipate when he was recruited into the army. The White Rose began writing leaflets in response to a dissolving support for the Third

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<sup>1</sup> Scholl, Hans, Sophie Scholl, and Richard Gilman. *At the Heart of the White Rose: Letters and Diaries of Hans and Sophie Scholl*. Ed. Inge Jens. Trans. J. Maxwell Brownjohn. New York: Harper & Row, 1987.

Reich and the ideals that came with it. It is as if Germany had to turn into rubble in order to become a new nation that was lead in the people's interest.

The German church changed throughout the Nazi era with the strength of Nazi ideology. The idea of Nazi ideology, compared to the rest of the world, began to seep into churches and this changed the way that Christians who were Germans viewed God and politics. Nazi ideology, or Nazism is an intense belief in Hitler and his government and the desire to make Germany the world power. Germans who believed in God and the Third Reich had a passionate belief of both of these ideas, so much so that they combined the ideals between the two to create German Christians. German Christians are different than Christians who were German at the time. German Christians combined the beliefs of Christianity and Nazism. Christians who were Germans believed in Christ and supported their country, but it does not mean that they supported the government Hitler was leading.

The German church combined its traditional Christian orthodoxy with Hitler's political platform. Most Germans accepted the political and economic change. However, there were many like the White Rose movement that saw the Third Reich for what it truly was. Hitler's quest for world domination. In response to this, it was the purpose of the White Rose to expose Hitler's agenda. They used the connection of an ideological battle between Nazi ideology and Christianity according to their biblical education they were raised on. They wanted to convince Germans who were Christians that Hitler's politics were detrimental to the German people. The White Rose wrote sixth leaflets with the ideological combinations of Christianity and Nazism to politically inform Germans of what was truly occurring in Germany and what they felt Germans should do about it.

## Literature Review

There were many forms of resistance during Hitler's reign. These resistance movements increased as the Nazi regime grew in power, and the desire for change amongst Germans increased. James Zabel explained, those who did not agree with Hitler's government decisions revolted in different ways. "During the war, resistance-- in the sense of principled and active opposition to the regime - was very limited in size."<sup>2</sup> Due to the range of propaganda that was dispersed throughout Germany, the inconsistencies created a level of paranoia due to the size of the active opposition. Though, many authors have written about resistance movements in Nazi Germany no one has yet analyse these leaflets.

Those resistance movements consisted of conservative and more liberal thinkers. Jeremy Noakes, the author of *Nazism*, explains that there were many different forms of resistance movements.<sup>3</sup> Opposition came in the forms of assassination attempts, military coup's, group efforts, and individuals taking it upon themselves to tell other Germans that Hitler would destroy Germany. These underground organizations created different ways to spread the word, many groups created pamphlets and leaflets to hand out to whoever would take them. The different resistance movements were viewed as treasonous and punishable by death. Jeremy Noakes in *Nazism* explains that resistance movements were hard to find because they were so secretive.<sup>4</sup> But that does not mean that they were not there. Moreover, it does not mean that multiple resistance movements were not plotting and organizing under suspicion of the Nazi Gestapo.

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<sup>2</sup> James A. Zabel, *Nazism, and the Pastors: A Study of the Ideas of Three German Christian Groups* (Montana: Scholars Press, 1977), 5.

<sup>3</sup> Jeremy Noakes, *Nazism: The German Home Front in World War 2, Vol.4* (United Kingdom: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 581-636.

<sup>4</sup> Noakes, Jeremy. *Nazism: The German Home Front in World War 2, Vol.4*. (United Kingdom: University of Exeter Press, 1998) 581-636.

The Red Orchestra was a resistance movement that was based on communist ideals that had the goal to persuade Germans to back the communists. They began their resistance in the early stages of the Third Reich. "The so-called 'Red Orchestra' was not the ring of Soviet spies portrayed in subsequent Nazi propaganda but a home-grown resistance movement whose contacts with Soviet intelligence were made on its own terms".<sup>5</sup> This group consisted of committed communists and visionaries. Both of these groups collectively supported Stalin over Hitler. This particular group worked with other resistance groups to overthrow Hitler.

There were others like Dietrich Bonhoeffer who were part of a large attempt to assassinate Hitler. This plot consisted of many different moving pieces. Bonhoeffer worked with his brother to infiltrate the Nazi cabinet and get close to its members in order to eventually get to a place where Hitler could be assassinated. "A prominent member of the Confessional Church, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was, from the outset, one of National Socialism's most tenacious opponents. ... He described Hitler as just one of the 'disguises in which evil has appeared' in our century and declared at a secret church congress in Geneva in 1941 that he prayed for the defeat of his country."<sup>6</sup> Bonhoeffer resisted the Third Reich in a form of passive but prayerful resistance. However, as the Reich continued its reign, the plot to assassinate Hitler followed. April 8, 1945 a kangaroo court was established and convicted Bonhoeffer and members of the resistance group. They were sent to a concentration camp that they would be executed. "On the stacks of clothing left behind were found the books that the victims had been reading when the end came: Bonhoeffer's, the Bible and a volume of Goethe's works..."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Evans, Richard J. *The Third Reich at War*. (New York, New York: Penguin Press, 2008) 626-627

<sup>6</sup> Fest, Joachim. *Plotting Hitler's Death*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996), 207.

<sup>7</sup> Fest, Joachim. *Plotting Hitler's Death*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996), 311.

There were also movements that were peaceful in nature but bold in action. A great example of this was Oskar Schindler, who was publicly known as a supporter of the Nazi Party. However, through a series of events Schindler saw with his own eyes what Hitler was doing to groups of people like the Jews, specifically the Polish Jews. Oskar Schindler purchased an enamel factory that he used to employ over one thousand Jewish people who were not only marginalized but also being sent to their death, to places like Auschwitz. By employing some of these people he was able to save their lives and give them a chance to move on after the war and create lives for themselves. Schindler was commissioned by the Nazi government to produce guns and other materials for the war. His factory created things like bowls and enamel wear but never created working guns. Because Schindler did not actually do what he was commissioned to do he suffered many losses monetarily and socially. However, though Schindler had lost most of his fortune in the effort to save this group of people he employed, it was still successful compared to the rest of the known resistance movements during this time.<sup>8</sup>

The White Rose movement is distinct because of the *way* they spread their convictions. The goal of the White Rose was to spread awareness of the realities of the Third Reich. They wanted to appeal to Germans who supported Hitler, to explain that split apart like they were, Germany will fall. But, together, with a sound mind they could defeat the tyrant and restore Germany. The White Rose had a clear political agenda; to convince Germans that Hitler would turn their country to rubble. They used religious language and concepts to explain their political goal for Germany. This evidence asks the question, how did they talk to those that were still a part of the church and manage to reach them? The religious and theological themes used

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<sup>8</sup> Evans, Richard J. *The Third Reich at War*. (New York, New York: Penguin Press, 2008) 556-557.

throughout the leaflets were meant to mobilize, to call any who would listen to action. The White Rose used words to inform and change the overall mindset of the political atmosphere.

Most scholars that speak about the White Rose focus on Sophie and Hans Scholl's narrative and the story that they created. Scholars view the six leaflets as pieces of history that contribute to the overall goals of the White Rose and of World War Two, specifically in Germany. The leaflets are a form of evidence that shows that the White Rose group made an effort to change the minds of Germans. Most of the resources that have been written, focus on the analysis of what happened and who was involved. These sources do not exposit the entire reasoning or significance of the actual words being used to convince people that there is a better future for Germany, one that does not include Hitler.

The overall goal of the White Rose was for the German people to gather together and revolt against Hitler. Within their leaflets, they called for a passive resistance instead of a violent one. However, they did not deny the possibility for the necessity of violence. Though the leaflets that the White Rose put out have not been studied from a political and religious perspective, it is one that is important because the "tactic" itself is still used to this day. It is important to understand that what happened during this time has many possible perspectives.

### **The Members of the White Rose**

There were many members of the White Rose resistance movement, however, the list of those that we do know are as follows. Hans and Sophie Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, Christoph Probst, and William Graf.<sup>9</sup> It is important to have a general idea of who these members were and the foundation for which they were coming from to write the leaflets that they did, to see why

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<sup>9</sup> Axelrod, Toby. *Hans and Sophie Scholl: German Resisters of the White Rose*. (New York: Rosen Pub. Group, 2001)



they were so passionate about their cause. Hans, Willi, and Christoph were sent to war to fight on the Eastern front, the border between Germany and Russia, this was how they met each other. Through these connections, they found a common thread between them and their opinion of the Third Reich. "A small group of Munich students were the only protesters who manages to break out of the vicious cycle of tactical considerations and other inhibitions. They spoke out vehemently, not only against the regime but also against the moral indolence and numbness of the German people. Under the name White Rose they issued appeals and painted slogans on walls caling for an uprising against Hitler."<sup>10</sup> The White Rose used six leaflets they wrote with the ideological combinations of Christianity and Nazism to politically inform Germans of what was truly occurring in Germany and what they felt Germans should do about it. The character of the members of the White Rose was strong and unmoving. This group brought together ideas, various strengths, and passions that came together to unite Germans to resist Hitler. "Their motives were among the simplest and, sadly, the rarest of all: a sense of right and wrong and a determination to take action."<sup>11</sup> The White Rose was willing to pay the price to act. Sophie Scholl said, "What does my death matter if by our action thousands of people are awakened and stirred to action?"<sup>12</sup>

Sophie, Hans, and Christoph were captured, interrogated and put on trial for crimes against the Reich. Soon after Sophie, Hans, and Christoph were arrested, tried, and executed the other members were arrested and either jailed or killed. They were interrogated in multiple ways. There are records of the interrogation for Sophie, Hans and Christoph. Sophie and Hans were

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<sup>10</sup> Fest, Joachim. *Plotting Hitler's Death*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996) 198.

<sup>11</sup> Fest, Joachim. *Plotting Hitler's Death*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996) 198.

<sup>12</sup> Fest, Joachim. *Plotting Hitler's Death*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996) 199.

arrested after they distributed their sixth leaflet at their University. A janitor caught them and then reported them to the Gestapo, the German police. They were taken to a Gestapo headquarters and then interrogated from there. During this time the arrest and trial was highly publicised in order for Hitler's regime to make a point to the German people. There was an underlying message to the German people that resistance was a futile action. Though the focus of this paper is not necessarily *how* the leaflets were produced, instead the concern is for the leaflets and their political and religiously persuasive content.

### **Methodology and Data**

The goal of this research is to explore how the White Rose used religious rhetoric to politically persuade the German people to resist the Third Reich.

I will analyze each of the six leaflets that the White Rose distributed to Germans all over the country by mail or by drop point. I will examine how the religious language, that is used in the Bible is also used in the leaflets. The biblical language that the White Rose uses articulates the political goals of the White Rose movement and creates a call to action for Germans.

The data that will be used are the leaflets written by the White Rose in resistance to the Third Reich. I also examine the letters of exchange between Sophie and Hans's family, and interrogation transcripts. The pamphlets that they wrote are typically used to describe the group as a resistance movement and what they did in resistance to Hitler. In scholarly nature of these leaflets are an additive to most scholars in their explanations for the White Rose. The leaflets were chosen because the White Rose has not been examined through their writings within the scope of their religious and political language. With this understanding, the White Rose stands out because of the way in which Sophie, Hans, and Willi's arrest were publicized throughout the

major cities of Germany like Munich and Berlin. The purview of the political and religious atmosphere for examining the leaflets will be with a theological, Christian mindset. Within this interpretation of the leaflets, the religious or Christian understanding of what is being said within them will have reference to how the Bible refers to those situations of the time. In other words, when looking at the metaphors or implied statements the biblical mindset will act as a filter for the examination of these leaflets.

### **Analysis of The White Rose Leaflets**<sup>13</sup>

Members of the White Rose wrote leaflets in opposition to Hitler. An analysis of these leaflets reveals that the White Rose used five major Christian religious themes. These themes include spiritual corruption, the yoke of slavery, faith in God, moral duty, and freedom. In what follows, I describe each theme and examine how the White Rose discussed this theme in order to accomplish their larger goal: encourage Germans, particularly Christian, to resist Hitler.

To begin, it is important to know what *kind* of resistance movement this was. In order to explain that the White Rose was passive, however the desire was for action, in other words they implied violence in order to cause change in Germany. The first leaflet that was distributed is a direct criticism of Hitler and the German people. “Nothing is so unworthy of a civilized nation to be ‘governed’ without opposition in an irresponsible clique that has yielded to base instinct.”<sup>14</sup> This is the first line of the first leaflet that was distributed by the White Rose. It was bold to start a call to resistance with a criticism of Hitler, because of the way he has governed Germany. The main writer of these leaflets was Hans Scholl and because Hans had been sent to the Eastern

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<sup>13</sup> All of the complete leaflets of the White Rose are in appendices 1-6 at the end of this paper.

<sup>14</sup> The White Rose, “Leaflet 1,” in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970) 73.

Front (Russian border) his knowledge of what Germany had become had increased because he saw it with his own eyes. The White Rose called Hitler's followers animals. With the terms, "irresponsible" and "base instinct", because these terms connote instinctual actions. These actions result in individuals caring for only themselves. These selfish actions, when leading a country could lead to its downfall. It is also important to know that for leaflets 1-5 they are considered to all have the group title of "Leaflets of the White Rose" and for 6-7 they are titled as "Leaflets of the Resistance". The difference in titles have no bearing on how they are analyzed.

The governing body of Germany also appears to claim that with Christ they can beat Hitler. They insinuate that the way that all holy wars have been fought has been with true anarchy. "True anarchy is the generative element of religion."<sup>15</sup> At first thought, this statement is off setting and creates a lot of questions as to what the real goals of the White Rose are. However, it is important to remember who was writing these leaflets. Hans Scholl was the main writer, but others like Willi Graf also contributed. It is important to consider their background before the leaflets. Willi and Hans saw the brutality and genocide that occurred. The war in that respect certainly opened Hans's Scholl's eyes to ask the question, what is Germany fighting for? Anarchy is chaos, in this case, Germany was a disorganized government. The dilemma is that in order to overthrow the evil in their world they have to create anarchy with God as the overthrower. They need to let God overthrow this government in order to actually save Germany and its people.

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<sup>15</sup>The White Rose, "Leaflet 4," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 87.

### *Spiritual Corruption*

Spiritual corruption is a dishonest, inauthentic spirit of Christ. The spirit can be corrupted by two factors, internal and external influences. It takes internal influences of the self to accept the external influences that arguably would corrupt the soul. When someone stands for nothing they will fall for anything, their soul is weak and falls prey to evil influences.

Leaflet one begins with a call to action and critique of the German people for their lack of resistance and ability to see what Germany has become.

If the German people are already so corrupted and spiritually crushed that they do not raise a hand, frivolously trusting in a questionable faith in lawful order in history; if they surrender man's highest principle, that which raises him above all other God's creatures, his free will; if they abandon the will to take decisive action and turn the wheel of history and thus subject it to their own rational decision; if they are so devoid of all individuality, have already gone so far along the road toward turning into a spineless and cowardly mass-- then, yes, they deserve their downfall.<sup>16</sup>

When a person forfeits their freedom of choice that action forgoes the price of Jesus's death on the cross. When no one questions authority, when it clearly is oppressive; there will never be change. When authority or governments are challenged it creates a reason for a change. Because Germans continued to accept anything that Hitler said and commanded, Germany was doomed. The White Rose also argued that if no one wants to question authority and demand the truth, then that group, in this case, Germany, deserves its disintegration. They deserve their demise not just because they did not question authority but because they renounced the gift of freedom of choice from God. Hitler and his cabinet denied God altogether, and a nation will not stand without God as the center, Germany as a Christian community.

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<sup>16</sup>The White Rose, "Leaflet 1," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 73-74.

The spirit is what some would consider being the strongest part of an individual someone because it is the closest connection to Christ because it is a gift from God. "Is your spirit already so crushed by abuse that you forget it is your right - or rather, your *moral duty* - to eliminate this system?"<sup>17</sup> As Germans who are Christians, they have a moral obligation to continue their own commitment to Christ and stand up to evil. It is not only a right for someone to be able to choose to worship God but it is their obligation to fight for that choice.

Next, there was more unapologetic criticism of the Third Reich. "Rather, by means of gradual, treacherous, systematic abuse, the system has put every man into a spiritual prison."<sup>18</sup> Because the German people were prevented from experiencing the freedom of choice, it created a form of oppression within Germany's freedom is a gift from God. However, as Hans said, "man has created this prison for himself". The White Rose argued that because the people of Germany did not see or understand what lack of freedom means, the White Rose said that it does not matter what form the arrest took. It happened nonetheless and it would continue to do so until Germans, come together and fight the authority that imprisoned them in the first place. If someone is in a spiritual prison then they do not have room to expand their understanding of religion or Christianity. Germany extinguished its own flame in the potential for prosperity amongst Germans before their flame could be re-lit in the aftermath of World War One.

Hitler's cabinet became an unquestioning posse of people that did Hitler's bidding. The cabinet put themselves on a pedestal and used that power to do what they wanted. "A system of selection of leaders at once unimaginably devilish and narrow-minded trains up its future party

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<sup>17</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 3," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 81-82.

<sup>18</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 1," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 74.

bigwigs in the 'Castles of the Knightly Order' to become Godless, impudent, and conscienceless exploiters and executioners--blind, stupid hangers-on of the Fuhrer."<sup>19</sup> Hitler's end goal for Germany was to use Christianity until it suited him. His next step after the extermination of German, Polish, Austrian and Bulgarian Jews was to eliminate Christians next. Because the US conquered Germany Hitler did not have the chance to complete the Final Solution. The fear was the loss of God within Germany. The White Rose's explanation was that those who supported Hitler were blind and irresponsible for not seeing the actuality of how close they all were to death. According to Hitler's plan little did German Christians know, they were next. Because those that supported Hitler chose not to see who and what he was, it was viewed as weakness to the White Rose. The White Rose argued that Germany needed a malleable sort of leader that would not end with Germany in rubble and its people, who survive, with nowhere to go.

### **The Yoke of Slavery**

The White Rose claimed that Germany was enslaved mentally, religiously, and for some, physically. Germany was the yoke upon the German's proverbial back. The people of Germany were enslaved to a government that was built on its propaganda that brainwashed its citizens. Hitler's goal was to take the people of Germany and "cleanse" the country of people he deemed undesirable. The economy during the Third Reich at first had the appearance that it was growing, however, it was in a cycle of decline again, compared to the recession after World War One.

"...our spiritual and economic enslavement at the hands of the National Socialists; of the destruction of all moral and religious values; and urge them to *passive resistance*!"<sup>20</sup> Economic

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<sup>19</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 7," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 91.

<sup>20</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 3," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 84.

enslavement affects anyone that lives within that community. Whether or not a people has the choice to be in the economy at hand it creates a cycle of destruction between classes. The White Rose calls its readers to exact passive resistance on the government, to push back against the government for which enslaved them and were systematically eliminating entire populations of people.

### **Faith in God**

A faith in God is strong and may waiver but never ceases. The White Rose claimed that Germans had no strength in their faith, meaning, they did not truly believe that God would deliver the people of Germany from the evil that was brought upon them. Though the suffering was incessant during the Third Reich the White Rose still saw hope for the future of Germany. "But if this catastrophe can be used to further the public welfare, it will be only by virtue of the fact that we are cleansed by suffering; that we yearn for the light in the midst of deepest night, summon our strength, and finally help in shaking off the yoke which weighs on our world."<sup>21</sup> The use of specific words such as public welfare, cleansed, suffering, strength and yoke are references to the Bible. In Galatians 5:1 it says, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."<sup>22</sup> Only through Christ could the German people be free. The White Rose references this Bible verse in an attempt to explain that many can be free from slavery of the Third Reich. Public welfare is the concern for the whole and a consideration for all. The terminology being used about the light at the end of the tunnel, and cleansing, is indicative of Christ saving His people. By referencing the

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<sup>21</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 2," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 78.

<sup>22</sup> Galatians 5:1 (NIV)



yoke it is imagery for the weight of something, meaning the weight of the Nazi government is weighing on all Germans and it will crush them if they do nothing about it.

Uniquely, of the six leaflets the fifth appears to be the more religiously heavy in theological language. “Every word that comes from Hitler’s mouth is a lie. When he says peace, he means war, and when he blasphemously uses the name of the Almighty, he means the power of evil, the fallen angel, Satan.”<sup>23</sup> Reiterating the facts about Hitler helps the White Rose to drive their point home to the readers. At this time they had distributed their fifth leaflet and it is likely that the leaflets were being talked about and word was spreading. “Copies of the final leaflet reached the British via Sweden, and the Royal Air Force dropped hundreds of thousands of copies over Germany in the spring of 1943.”<sup>24</sup> It is unquestioned that people all over Europe received the leaflet that the White Rose wrote. During this time there were also other resistance movements in process during this time. Though they are not the focus of this paper it is important to remember that there were other moving parts of resistance to the Third Reich.

Hitler was compared to Satan, the White Rose viewed his totalitarian dictatorship as an evil in Germany that had to be eliminated. “...but whoever today still doubts the reality, the existence of demonic powers, has failed by a wide margin to understand the metaphysical background of this war.”<sup>25</sup> The White Rose has established with possible readers that Hitler was evil and so was his campaign for world domination. Hitler was not good for Germany and the White Rose members explained the true reality of what Germany was facing. Germans were

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<sup>23</sup> The White Rose, “Leaflet 4,” in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 85.

<sup>24</sup> Noakes, Jeremy. *Nazism: The German Home Front in World War 2, Vol.4.* (United Kingdom: University of Exeter Press, 1998) 395.

<sup>25</sup> The White Rose, “Leaflet 4,” in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 86.

urged to pay attention and look at the reality of the evil in their country. This war was not only a physical one but it was also philosophically and morally questionable. It created a conversation about the confusion for some who truly did not know what to believe in.

In order to create a society that is worthy of a community, in this case, Germany, then it should be modeled after God's community, as explained within the Bible. "The state should exist as a parallel to the Divine order, and the highest of all utopias, the *civitas Dei*, or, The City of God, is the model which in the end it should approximate."<sup>26</sup> The *civitas Dei* or the Kingdom of God is the main focus of this comment because Christians need to strive to be like Christ in spirit and action. In Matthew 6:33, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."<sup>27</sup> But, Germans that are Christians, also need to strive to build a kingdom or country that models after Christ's plan for God's people.

God's will is for every man and woman to have the freedom to worship God and secure the freedom of choice within an individual's life. "Every individual being has a claim to a useful and just state, a state which secures the freedom of the individual as well as the good of the whole. For, according to God's will, man is intended to pursue his natural goal, his earthly happiness, in self-reliance and self-chosen activity, freely and independently within the community of life and work of the nation."<sup>28</sup> In order for a community to prosper God has to be the foundation. The body of Christ, or the group of Christians of which creates community with

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<sup>26</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 3," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 81.

<sup>27</sup> Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

<sup>28</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 4," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 81.

God as the centerfold for which a people can prosper within it. It is theologically and biblically accurate that God desires for His people to thrive in the place that Christ placed them in.

The following quote is interesting because it is a reference to the family unit. The White Rose is using the idea of the family unit, within a Christian perspective in order to resonate with Germans. "The family is as old as man himself, and out of this initial bond, man endowed with reason, created for himself a state founded on justice, whose highest law was the common good."<sup>29</sup> The family unit that was referenced is a direct correlation to a Godly family. Meaning, God is the original family because God created Adam and Eve. They are the first of man provided with reason. This imagery and diction are used to explain that Germans are a family and they have been endowed with reason. Because of this reason a person has justice and God is at the forefront of that justice and has a common good for all. The cry is for Germany to become a family again and use the reason that God has given them to fight the injustice that has occurred in Germany.

Hitler was compared to the Anti-Christ. The White Rose used the imagery and the reality of what the Bible teaches to explain that demons are real and there is real evil in our midst. There is an evil that is fighting with man and winning.

"...the struggle against the demon, against the servants of the Antichrist. Everywhere and at all times demons have been lurking in the dark, waiting for the moment when man is weak; when of his own volition he leaves his place in the order of Creation as founded for him by God in freedom; when he yields to the force of evil, separates himself from the powers of a higher order; and , after voluntarily taking the first step, he is driven on to the next and the next at a furiously accelerating rate."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 3," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 81.

<sup>30</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 4," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 86.

There is a lot of strong language as to the evil of the world which is a direct reference to the way that God warns God's people to beware the evil in the world and to hold steadfastly to hope and each other. The White Rose is referencing Revelation. Revelation is the last book of the Bible, within this book the story of God's return and the end of the world is explained. The reference to demons lurking in the dark was a direct connection to Hitler's cabinet members. Hitler was the Antichrist or Satan and his minions or cabinet members are the demons that do his bidding. This language was not only critical but it was strong in the sense that demons, Satan, and the Antichrist was all apocalyptic, end of the world language. In other words, the Antichrist appears throughout the Bible, like the Gospels. The author of John says "Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour."<sup>31</sup> This imagery is quite terrifying but it also strikes fear into the hearts of those who are passively watching Germany ruin itself.

The direct reference to religion in this leaflet is comparable to a statement of faith. It was a declaration to de-throne Hitler and let God back into Germany. "Only religion can reawaken Europe, establish the rights of the peoples, and install Christianity in new splendor visibly on earth in its office as guarantor of peace."<sup>32</sup> As referenced to a previous leaflet, Germans should come together to build a kingdom or country, that has God as the foundation for which to build it upon. There is no confusion as to what the White Rose desires for Germany, bringing God back into the fold for Europe is also what will save it. Christianity and those that believe in it will help to exact a peace upon Europe.

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<sup>31</sup> 1 John 2:18

<sup>32</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 4," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 87.

### **Moral Duty**

The White Rose drew an interesting comparison and distinction between faith in God and a moral duty. For the most part the White Rose seemed to consider these themes one in the same, however, they address Christians as believers but also Germans, who care about their country and the protection of its people. After the picture of having no direction the White Rose turned their tone into an actionable way for Germans to resist the Third Reich. “I ask you, you as a Christian wrestling for the preservation of your greatest treasure, whether you hesitate, whether you incline toward intrigue, calculation, or procrastination in the hope that someone else will raise his arm in your defense? Has God not given you the strength, the will to fight? We *must* attack evil where it is strongest and it is strongest in the power of Hitler.”<sup>33</sup> The German people have to stand together, to pull their strengths and eliminate their fears together and fight the evil that is destroying their home. God has given the people of Germany the strength to fight and the White Rose argues that disobeying God was not using their strength to fight the evil that is enslaving them.

As Hans Scholl continued, he provided the example of how people have tried to resist Hitler’s regime and in their heroic resistance they were killed. Every individual has a responsibility as a Christian to fight for the word of God and the well being of God’s people. “Therefore every individual, conscious of his responsibility as a member of Christian and Western civilization, must defend himself as best he can at this late hour, he must work against the scourges of mankind, against fascism and any similar system of totalitarianism. Offer passive

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<sup>33</sup> The White Rose, “Leaflet 4,” in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 86.

resistance--*resistance*--wherever you may be, forestall the spread of this atheistic war machine..."<sup>34</sup> This was a call to resist in its ultimate form. Use the word of God to fight against the evil that was occurring in their reality. The White Rose calls the "war machine" atheistic, meaning it is Christless. Most wars have been fought for what a group believes in, willing to die for. When there is no Christ in the motivations behind the war, then what is being fought for. What war is actually occurring? Is it a war of religion or for power? The White Rose argues that because Hitler is attempting to rid Germany of Christianity, it has become a war of religion and the ideals of freedom and what religion brings to the political table. The White Rose asserted that this is a pointless war brought on by Hitler that is not only Christless, but it is an attack on Christianity and the entirety of the idea of freedom.

### **Freedom**

We are given freedom and we are called not to abuse that freedom. Hitler abused that freedom and therefore disobeyed God. The White Rose argues that they (Germans) were free because God gives the freedom to love and serve others. The White Rose recognized this and used their leaflets to make this point; that God not only provides freedom but also *is* freedom.

With Christ, the people of this world have been set free and no human can take that away from an individual that has committed their life to Christ. "Man is free, to be sure, but without the true God he is defenseless against the principle of evil. He is a like rudderless ship, at the mercy of the storm, an infant without his mother, a cloud dissolving into thin air."<sup>35</sup> Freedom in Christ is the ultimate form of freedom no matter the earthly circumstances. The freedom of an individual

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<sup>34</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 1," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 74.

<sup>35</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 4," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 86.

and a rudderless ship has the most imagery of the leaflets. The picture in the reader's mind is a boat, floating without direction. A Germany that has no direction has no footing within the events of the world around them. Germany would not have any standing within the world conversation if they continued on the path that they were on. In other words, as Hans Scholl said, a cloud of mist.

The idea of freedom within a community and the individual's freedom to choose is dampened when a struggle for the spirit ensues. "That is a beginning of the struggle for our free self-determination -- without which intellectual and spiritual values cannot be created."<sup>36</sup> In order to fight for freedom there has to be an intellectual and physical cause. Like Jesus fought and died for the world's sins it was both a very real and physical death, a sacrifice. However, the sacrifice created a meaning for all believers. The death of Jesus Christ gives Christians the strength to continue through the evils of this world and frees us from the world. The White Rose is saying we not only have a physical reason to fight for Germany because our people are dying but intellectually how can we fight for something that we don't appear to care about. To explain more, the fight for our freedom is both physical and intellectual because freedom is an all-encompassing idea that has been taken from Germany. Human's have been given freedom by God, what man should have the power to take that freedom, no man at all. This idea is what they argue is worth fighting for, and for the White Rose, dying for.

The second leaflet begins with another criticism, in particular, the censure of Germany's system of government, National Socialism. "It is impossible to engage in intellectual discourse

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<sup>36</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 6," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 92.

with National Socialism because it is not an intellectually defensible program."<sup>37</sup> National Socialism is specific to Nazi Germany. It is a form of a political party that fits within socialism and totalitarianism. The totalitarian form of government that Hitler lead put those who were considered "elite" economically, socially, or politically were put above the rest. Elitist ideas eliminate God from the government and its people. Totalitarian ideals prevented a foundation for which a people can grow and prosper on because it is being controlled by a godless dictator, in this case, Hitler.

After the criticism of the National Socialist party, the White Rose also explained that though change is necessary for Germany in order for its people to survive the Reich. The White Rose expressed their reasoning that they too do not have all of the answers. But they do know that there has to be an alternative to the direction for Germany. "We are not in a position to draw up a final judgment about the meaning of our history."<sup>38</sup> The White Rose presents the opinion that the history of Germany has been tainted because of Hitler. But, the overall understanding of what the history of Germany really means was unknown to them at the time. It is hard to understand a situation when one is actually in it. The wisdom of this statement recognizes that even they do not know how this will impact the future except that it will.

\_\_\_\_\_Throughout leaflet six it appears to have more political language than the rest of the leaflets. This particular piece is making a statement on the actual condition of Germany and what is truly going on, more so than the other leaflets that were written. The language about National Socialism and its ineptitude to lead a country is the main focus of this leaflet. This distinction

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<sup>37</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 2," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 77.

<sup>38</sup>The White Rose, "Leaflet 2," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 78.



makes this leaflet stand out. Though it does not have as many religious references it still focuses on freedom from National Socialism. "Dissociate yourselves from the National Socialist gangsterism. Prove by your deeds that you think otherwise. A new war of liberation is about to begin. The better part of the nation will fight on our side."<sup>39</sup>The White Rose is making an interesting distinction apart from their other publications that people may be starting to see what Germany has truly become. By the sixth leaflet it is highly probable that Germans started to notice that the Third Reich was about to end and it would not be in victory.

After the many different leaflets written and spoke about multiple ideas and criticisms, the White Rose calls for resistance for the last time. "Our people stand ready to rebel against the National Socialist enslavement of Europe in a fervent new breakthrough of freedom and honor."<sup>40</sup> The end of the White Rose's last leaflet there were multiple things going on. Due to the specific language of "our people" and "ready", it insinuates that the leaflets may have been effective. Though there is no documented evidence we do know that many people around Berlin, Munich, and rural parts of Germany received these leaflets and may have read them. There is also the possibility that because the last leaflet was distributed only a few weeks before the American forces infiltrated Germany, the German people were becoming restless. Many different situations like assassination attempts and coup d'etats happened that caused the German people to question who was leading their country. Faith in Hitler was diminishing and due to knowledge of what was happening in the west and the east Germany was about to be boxed in and Germans

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<sup>39</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 5," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 89.

<sup>40</sup> The White Rose, "Leaflet 6," in *Students against Tyranny; the Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943* by Inge Scholl, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1970), 93.

knew it. The U.S. was coming in from the west and the south and Russia was coming in from the east and the north. The end was near for Germany when the sixth leaflet came out. Because of the discourse of these leaflets it is possible that even the White Rose knew that the end was near for the Third Reich. It appears that they had the forethought to recognize the end of a dictatorship.

### **Conclusion**

The White Rose risked their lives to fight an evil unlike any the modern world had seen. Adolf Hitler was a force to be reckoned with, and the White Rose, as well as many other resistance movements, wanted to save Germany from destruction. Some were violent in their resistance and others were passive, but resistant nonetheless. It would be a dishonor to the Scholl family and the members of the White Rose to say that they were simply passively resistant. Sophie Scholl was a woman ahead of her time. The leaflets that the White Rose wrote were specific to Germany at the time, however, they can be applied to any nation or people that are suffering. The bravery of the White Rose was unlike any other recorded resistance movement during the Third Reich because they used a taboo political opinion of the time and put God in it. It was bold and risky to not only criticize Hitler but to also explain that God did not give us strength in Him to simply passively watch people die. This paper has shown that resistance comes in many forms. These leaflets provide insight into how politics and religion overlap all the time, it does not matter what time period it is. Resistance is a fight for what that individual considers to be their freedom. Freedom is an ideal that is physical and intellectual. Meaning, the people that lived in Germany during the Third Reich were stuck there, and complying was the way to survive. The White Rose compared complying to accepting National Socialism like lying

dead and letting them (Nazi's) have your body. Though the members of the White Rose were murdered by Hitler's minions they still made waves in the community to make people question their moral and physical situation that they found themselves in. Though most of the members of the White Rose lost their lives to the cause their spirit still continues to live on, "The three first martyrs of the White Rose were buried in Perlach Cemetery in south Munich on February 24. After the execution, someone painted graffiti in Munich -- 'Their spirit lives.' Later , the final leaflet was again distributed, this time with an extra line: 'Despite everything, their spirit lives on.' "<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Axelrod, Toby. *Hans and Sophie Scholl: German Resisters of the White Rose*. (New York: Rosen Pub. Group, 2001)94.

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### **Appendix 1: The First Leaflet**<sup>42</sup>

Nothing is so unworthy of a civilized nation as allowing itself to be “governed” without opposition by an irresponsible clique that has yielded to base instinct. It is certain that today every honest German is ashamed of his government. Who among us has any conception of the dimensions of shame that will befall us and our children when one day the veil has fallen from our eyes and the most horrible of crimes-- crimes that infinitely outdistance every human measure-- reach the light of day? If the German people are already so corrupted and spiritually crushed that they do not raise a hand, frivolously trusting in a questionable faith in lawful order in history; if they surrender man’s highest principle, that which raises him above all other God’s creatures, his free will; if they abandon the will to take decisive action and turn the wheel of history and thus subject it to their own rational decision; if they are so devoid of all individuality, have already gone so far along the road toward turning into a spiritless and cowardly mass-- then, yes, they deserve their downfall. Goethe speaks of the Germans as a tragic people, like the Jews and the Greeks, but today it would appear rather that they are a spineless, will-less herd of hangers-on, who now-- the marrow sucked out of their bones, robbed of their center of stability-- are waiting to be hounded to their destruction. So it seems-- but it is not so. Rather, by means of gradual, treacherous, systematic abuse, the system has put every man into a spiritual prison. Only now, finding himself lying in fetters, has he become aware of his fate. Only a few recognized the threat of ruin, and the reward for their heroic warning was death. We will have more to say about the fate of these persons. If everyone waits until the other man makes a start, the messengers of avenging Nemesis will come steadily closer; then even the last victim will have been cast senselessly into the maw of the insatiable demon. Therefore every individual, conscious of his responsibility as a member of Christian and Western civilization, must defend himself as best he can at this late hour, he must work against the scourges of mankind, against fascism and any similar system of totalitarianism. Offer passive resistance-- *resistance*-- wherever you may be, forestall the spread of this atheistic war machine before it is too late, before the last cities, like Cologne, have been reduced to rubble, and before the nation’s last young man has given his blood on some battlefield for the *hubris* of a sub-human. Do not forget that every people deserves the regime it is willing to endure.”

From Friedrich Schiller’s “The Lawgiving of Lycurgus and Solon”:

Viewed in relation to its purposes, the code of Lycurgus is a masterpiece of political science and knowledge of human nature. He desired a powerful, unassailable state, firmly established on its own principles. Political effectiveness and permanence were the goal toward which he strove, and he attained this goal to the full extent possible under the circumstances. But if one compares the purpose Lycurgus had in view with the purposes of mankind, then a deep abhorrence takes the place of the approbation which we felt at first glance. Anything may be sacrificed to the good of the state except that end for which the State serves as a means. The state is never an end in itself; it is important only as a condition under which the purpose of mankind can be attained, and this purpose is none other than the development of all of man’s powers, his

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<sup>42</sup> Students Against Tyranny: The Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943

White Rose, The (pamphlet) *Franz J. Muller, et al.*, White Rose Foundation, Munich 1991

Leaflets of the White Rose -Thomas J. Cox, ISBN:1879710021, Riverside Books, July 1991

progress and improvement. If a state prevents the development of the capacities which reside in man, if it interferes with the progress of the human spirit, then it is reprehensible and injurious, no matter how excellently devised, how perfect in its own way. It's very permanence in that case amounts more to a reproach than to a basis for fame; it becomes a prolonged evil, and the longer it endures, the more harmful it is....

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

A law of the state made it the duty of Spartans to be inhumane to their slaves; in these unhappy victims of war humanity itself was insulted and mistreated. In the Spartan code of law the dangerous principle was promulgated that men are to be looked upon as means and not as ends-- and the foundations of natural law and of morality were destroyed by that law....

What an admirable sight is afforded, by contrast, by the rough soldier Gaius Marcius in his camp before Rome, when he renounced vengeance and victory because he could not endure to see a mother's tears!...

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

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

Spirits:

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

Hope:

Now I find my good men  
Are gathered in the night,  
To wait in silence, not to sleep.  
And the glorious word of liberty  
They whisper and murmur,  
Til in unaccustomed strangeness,  
On the steps of our temple  
Once again in delight they cry:  
Freedom! Freedom!

Please make as many copies of this leaflet as you can and distribute them.

### **Appendix Two: The Second Leaflet**

It is impossible to engage in intellectual discourse with National Socialist Philosophy, for if there were such an entity, one would have to try by means of analysis and discussion either to prove its validity or to combat it. In actuality, however, we face a totally different situation. At its very inception this movement depended on the deception and betrayal of one's fellow man; even at that time it was inwardly corrupt and could support itself only by constant lies.

After all, Hitler states in an early edition of "his" book (a book written in the worst German I have ever read, in spite of the fact that it has been elevated to the position of the Bible in this nation of poets and thinkers): "It is unbelievable, to what extent one must betray a people in order to rule it." If at the start this cancerous growth in the nation was not particularly noticeable, it was only because there were still enough forces at work that operated for the good, so that it was kept under control.

As it grew larger, however, and finally in an ultimate spurt of growth attained ruling power, the tumor broke open, as it were, and infected the whole body. The greater part of its former opponents went into hiding. The German intellectuals fled to their cellars, there, like plants struggling in the dark, away from light and sun, gradually to choke to death. Now the end is at hand. Now it is our task to find one another again, to spread information from person to person, to keep a steady purpose, and to allow ourselves no rest until the last man is persuaded of the urgent need of his struggle against this system. When thus a wave of unrest goes through the land, when "it is in the air," when many join the cause, then in a great final effort this system can be shaken off. After all, an end in terror is preferable to terror without end.

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

We do not want to discuss here the question of the Jews, nor do we want in this leaflet to compose a defense or apology. No, only by way of example do we want to cite the fact that since the conquest of Poland three hundred thousand Jews have been murdered in this country in the most bestial way. Here we see the most frightful crime against human dignity, a crime that is unparalleled in the whole of history. For Jews, too, are human beings - no matter what position we take with respect to the Jewish question - and a crime of this dimension has been perpetrated against human beings. Someone may say that the Jews deserve their fate. This assertion would be a monstrous impertinence; but let us assume that someone said this - what position has he then taken toward the fact that the entire Polish aristocratic youth is being annihilated? (May God grant that this program has not yet fully achieved its aim as yet!) All male offspring of the houses of the nobility between the ages of fifteen and twenty were transported to concentration camps in Germany and sentenced to forced labor, and all the girls of this age group were sent to Norway, into the bordellos of the SS!

Why tell you these things, since you are fully aware of them - or if not of these, then of other equally grave crimes committed by this frightful sub-humanity? Because here we touch on a problem which involves us deeply and forces us all to take thought. Why do German people

behave so apathetically in the face of all these abominable crimes, crimes so unworthy of the human race? Hardly anyone thinks about that. It is accepted as fact and put out of mind. The German people slumber on in their dull, stupid sleep and encourage these fascist criminals; they give them the opportunity to carry on their depredations; and of course they do so. Is this a sign that the Germans are brutalized in their simplest human feelings, that no chord within them cries out at the sight of such deeds, that they have sunk into a fatal consciencelessness from which they will never, never awake? It seems to be so, and will certainly be so, if the German does not at last start up out of his stupor, if he does not protest wherever and whenever he can against this clique of criminal, if he shows no sympathy for these hundreds of thousands of victims. He must evidence not only sympathy; no, much more: a sense of complicity in guilt.

For through his apathetic behavior he gives these evil men the opportunity to act as they do; he tolerates this "government" which has taken upon itself such an infinitely great burden of guilt; indeed, he himself is to blame for the fact that it came about at all! Each man wants to be exonerated of a guilt of this kind, each one continues on his way with the most placid, the calmest conscience. But he cannot be exonerated; he is guilty, guilty, guilty! It is not too late, however, to do away with this most reprehensible of all miscarriages of government, so as to avoid being burdened with even greater guilt. Now, when in recent years our eyes have been opened, when we know exactly who our adversary is, it is high time to root out this brown horde. Up until the outbreak of the war the larger part of the German people was blinded; the Nazis did not show themselves in their true aspect. But now, now that we have recognized them for what they are, it must be the sole and first duty, the holiest duty of every German to destroy these beasts.

If the people are barely aware that the government exists, they are happy. When the government is felt to be oppressive they are broken.

Good fortune, alas! builds itself upon misery. Good fortune, alas! is the mask of misery. What will come of this? We cannot foresee the end. Order is upset and turns to disorder, good becomes evil. The people are confused. Is it not so, day in, day out, from the beginning?

The wise man is therefore angular, though he does not injure others; he has sharp corners, though he does not harm; he is upright but not gruff. He is clearminded, but he does not try to be brilliant.

Lao-Tzu

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

The kingdom is a living being. It cannot be constructed, in truth! He who tries to manipulate it will spoil it, he who tries to put it under his power will lose it.

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



The wise man will accordingly forswear excess, he will avoid arrogance and not overreach.

Lao-Tzu

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

### **Appendix 3: The Third Leaflet**

Salus publica suprema lex

All ideal forms of government are utopias. A state cannot be constructed on a purely theoretical basis; rather, it must grow and ripen in the way an individual human being matures. But we must not forget that at the starting point of every civilization the state was already there in rudimentary form. The family is as old as man himself, and out of this initial bond man, endowed with reason, created for himself a state founded on justice, whose highest law was the common good. The state should exist as a parallel to the divine order, and the highest of all utopias, the civitas dei, is the model which in the end it should approximate. Here we will not pass judgment on the many possible forms of the state - democracy, constitutional monarchy, and so on.

But one matter needs to be brought out clearly and unambiguously. Every individual human being has a claim to a useful and just state, a state which secures freedom of the individual as well as the good of the whole. For, according to God's will, man is intended to pursue his natural goal, his earthly happiness, in self-reliance and self-chosen activity, freely and independently within the community of life and work of the nation.

But our present "state" is the dictatorship of evil. "Oh, we've known that for a long time," I hear you object, "and it isn't necessary to bring that to our attention again." But, I ask you, if you know that, why do you not bestir yourselves, why do you allow these men who are in power to rob you step by step, openly and in secret, of one domain of your rights after another, until one day nothing, nothing at all will be left but a mechanized state system presided over by criminals and drunks? Is your spirit already so crushed by abuse that you forget it is your right - or rather, your moral duty - to eliminate this system? But if a man no longer can summon the strength to demand his right, then it is absolutely certain that he will perish. We would deserve to be dispersed through the earth like dust before the wind if we do not muster our powers at this late hour and finally find the courage which up to now we have lacked. Do not hide your cowardice behind a cloak of expediency, for with every new day that you hesitate, failing to oppose this offspring of Hell, your guilt, as in a parabolic curve, grows higher and higher.

Many, perhaps most, of the readers of these leaflets do not see clearly how they can practice an effective opposition. They do not see any avenues open to them. We want to try to show them that everyone is in a position to contribute to the overthrow of this system. It is not possible through solitary withdrawal, in the manner of embittered hermits, to prepare the ground for the overturn of this "government" or bring about the revolution at the earliest possible moment. No, it can be done only by the cooperation of many convinced, energetic people - people who are

agreed as to the means they must use to attain their goal. We have no great number of choices as to these means. The only one available is passive resistance.

The meaning and the goal of passive resistance is to topple National Socialism, and in this struggle we must not recoil from any course, any action, whatever its nature. At all points we must oppose National Socialism, wherever it is open to attack. We must soon bring this monster of a state to an end. A victory of fascist Germany in this war would have immeasurable, frightful consequences. The military victory over Bolshevism dare not become the primary concern of the Germans. The defeat of the Nazis must unconditionally be the first order of business, the greater necessity of this latter requirement will be discussed in one of our forthcoming leaflets.

And now every convinced opponent of National Socialism must ask himself how he can fight against the present "state" in the most effective way, how he can strike it the most telling blows. Through passive resistance, without a doubt. We cannot provide each man with the blueprint for his acts, we can only suggest them in general terms, and he alone will find the way of achieving this end:

Sabotage in armament plants and war industries, sabotage at all gatherings, rallies, public ceremonies, and organizations of the National Socialist Party. Obstruction of the smooth functioning of the war machine (a machine for war that goes on solely to shore up and perpetuate the National Socialist Party and its dictatorship). Sabotage in all the areas of science and scholarship which further the continuation of the war - whether in universities, technical schools, laboratories, research institutes, or technical bureaus. Sabotage in all cultural institutions which could potentially enhance the "prestige" of the fascists among the people. Sabotage in all branches of the arts which have even the slightest dependence on National Socialism or render it service.

Sabotage in all publications, all newspapers, that are in the pay of the "government" and that defend its ideology and aid in disseminating the brown lie. Do not give a penny to public drives (even when they are conducted under the pretense of charity). For this is only a disguise. In reality the proceeds aid neither the Red Cross nor the needy. The government does not need this money; it is not financially interested in these money drives. After all, the presses run continuously to manufacture any desired amount of paper currency. But the populace must be kept constantly under tension, the pressure of the bit must not be allowed to slacken! Do not contribute to the collections of metal, textiles, and the like. Try to convince all your acquaintances, including those in the lower social classes, of the senselessness of continuing, of the hopelessness of this war; of our spiritual and economic enslavement at the hands of the National Socialists; of the destruction of all moral and religious values; and urge them to passive resistance!

Aristotle, *Politics*: "... and further, it is part [of the nature of tyranny] to strive to see to it that nothing is kept hidden of that which any subject says or does, but that everywhere he will be spied upon, ... and further, to set man against the privileged and the wealthy. Also it is part of these tyrannical measures, to keep the subjects poor, in order to pay the guards and soldiers, and so that they will be occupied with earning their livelihood and will have neither leisure nor opportunity to engage in conspiratorial acts.... Further, [to levy] such taxes on income as were

imposed in Syracuse, for under Dionysius the citizens gladly paid out their whole fortunes in taxes within five years. Also, the tyrant is inclined constantly to ferment wars."

Please duplicate and distribute!

#### **Appendix 4: The Fourth Leaflet**

There is an ancient maxim that we repeat to our children: "He who won't listen will have to feel." But a wise child will not burn his fingers the second time on a hot stove. In the past weeks Hitler has choked up successes in Africa and in Russia. In consequence, optimism on the one hand and distress and pessimism on the other have grown within the German people with a rapidity quite inconsistent with traditional German apathy. On all sides one hears among Hitler's opponents - the better segments of the population - exclamations of despair, words of disappointment and discouragement, often ending with the question: "Will Hitler now, after all...?"

Meanwhile, the German offensive against Egypt has ground to a halt. Rommel has to bide his time in a dangerously exposed position. But the push into the East proceeds. This apparent success has been purchased at the most horrible expense of human life, and so it can no longer be counted an advantage. Therefore we must warn against all optimism.

Neither Hitler nor Goebbels can have counted the dead. In Russia thousands are lost daily. It is the time of the harvest, and the reaper cuts into the ripe grain with wide strokes. Mourning takes up her abode in the country cottages, and there is no one to dry the tears of the mothers. Yet Hitler feeds with lies those people whose most precious belongings he has stolen and whom he has driven to a meaningless death.

Every word that comes from Hitler's mouth is a lie. When he says peace, he means war, and when he blasphemously uses the name of the Almighty, he means the power of evil, the fallen angel, Satan. His mouth is the foul-smelling maw of Hell, and his might is at bottom accursed. True, we must conduct a struggle against the National Socialist terrorist state with rational means; but whoever today still doubts the reality, the existence of demonic powers, has failed by a wide margin to understand the metaphysical background of this war. Behind the concrete, the visible events, behind all objective, logical considerations, we find the irrational element: The struggle against the demon, against the servants of the Antichrist.

Everywhere and at all times demons have been lurking in the dark, waiting for the moment when man is weak; when of his own volition he leaves his place in the order of Creation as founded for him by God in freedom; when he yields to the force of evil, separates himself from the powers of a higher order; and after voluntarily taking the first step, he is driven on to the next and the next at a furiously accelerating rate. Everywhere and at all times of greatest trial men have appeared, prophets and saints who cherished their freedom, who preached the One God and who His help brought the people to a reversal of their downward course. Man is free, to be sure, but without the true God he is defenseless against the principle of evil. He is a like rudderless ship, at the mercy of the storm, an infant without his mother, a cloud dissolving into thin air.

I ask you, you as a Christian wrestling for the preservation of your greatest treasure, whether you hesitate, whether you incline toward intrigue, calculation, or procrastination in the hope that someone else will raise his arm in your defence? Has God not given you the strength, the will to fight? We must attack evil 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 were 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 than the living which are yet alive. Ecclesiastes 4

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

Novalis

We wish expressly to point out that the White Rose is not in the pay of any foreign power. Though we know that National Socialist power must be broken by military means, we are trying to achieve a renewal from within of the severely wounded German spirit. This rebirth must be preceded, however, by the clear recognition of all the guilt with which the German people have burdened themselves, and by an uncompromising battle against Hitler and his all too many minions, party members, Quislings, and the like. With total brutality the chasm that separates the better portion of the nation from everything that is opened wide. For Hitler and his followers there is no punishment on this Earth commensurate with their crimes.

But out of love for coming generations we must make an example after the conclusion of the war, so that no one will ever again have the slightest urge to try a similar action. And do not forget the petty scoundrels in this regime; note their names, so that none will go free! They should not find it possible, having had their part in these abominable crimes, at the last minute to rally to another flag and then act as if nothing had happened! To set you at rest, we add that the addresses of the readers of the White Rose are not recorded in writing. They were picked at random from directories.

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

### **Appendix 5: The Fifth Leaflet**

A Call to All Germans!

The war is approaching its destined end. As in the year 1918, the German government is trying to focus attention exclusively on the growing threat of submarine warfare, while in the East the

armies are constantly in retreat and invasion is imminent in the West. Mobilization in the United States has not yet reached its climax, but already it exceeds anything that the world has ever seen. It has become a mathematical certainty that Hitler is leading the German people into the abyss. Hitler cannot win the war; he can only prolong it. The guilt of Hitler and his minions goes beyond all measure. Retribution comes closer and closer.

But what are the German people doing? They will not see and will not listen. Blindly they follow their seducers into ruin. Victory at any price! is inscribed on their banner. "I will fight to the last man," says Hitler-but in the meantime the war has already been lost.

Germans! Do you and your children want to suffer the same fate that befell the Jews? Do you want to be judged by the same standards as your traducers? Are we to be forever a nation which is hated and rejected by all mankind? No. Dissociate yourselves from National Socialist gangsters. Prove by your deeds that you think otherwise. A new war of liberation is about to begin. The better part of the nation will fight on our side. Cast off the cloak of indifference you have wrapped around you. Make the decision before it is too late. Do not believe the National Socialist propaganda which has driven the fear of Bolshevism into your bones.

Do not believe that Germany's welfare is linked to the victory of national Socialism for good or ill. A criminal regime cannot achieve a German victory. Separate yourselves in time from everything connected with National Socialism. In the aftermath a terrible but just judgment will be meted out to those who stayed in hiding, who were cowardly and hesitant.

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

The imperialist ideology of force, from whatever side it comes, must be shattered for all time. A one sided Prussian militarism must never again be allowed to assume power. Only in large-scale cooperation among the nations of Europe can the ground be prepared for reconstruction. Centralized hegemony, such as the Prussian state has tried to exercise in Germany and in Europe, must be cut down at its inception. The Germany of the future must be a federal state. At this juncture only a sound federal system can imbue a weakened Europe with a new life. The workers must be liberated from their condition of down trodden slavery under National Socialism. The illusory structure of autonomous national industry must disappear. Every nation and each man have a right to the goods of the whole world!

Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the protection of individual citizens from the arbitrary will of criminal regimes of violence-these will be the bases of the New Europe.

Support the resistance. Distribute the leaflets!

**Appendix 6: The Sixth Leaflet**

Fellow Fighters in the Resistance!

Shaken and broken, our people behold the loss of the men of Stalingrad. Three hundred and thirty thousand German men have been senselessly and irresponsibly driven to death and destruction by the inspired strategy of our World War I Private First Class. Fuhrer, we thank you!

The German people are in ferment. Will we continue to entrust the fate of our armies to a dilettante? Do we want to sacrifice the rest of German youth to the base ambitions of a Party clique? No, never! The day of reckoning has come - the reckoning of German youth with the most abominable tyrant our people have ever been forced to endure. In the name of German youth we demand restitution by Adolf Hitler's state of our personal freedom, the most precious treasure we have, out of which he has swindled us in the most miserable way.

We grew up in a state in which all free expression of opinion is unscrupulously suppressed. The Hitler Youth, the SA, the SS have tried to drug us, to revolutionize us, to regiment us in the most promising young years of our lives. "Philosophical training" is the name given to the despicable method by which our budding intellectual development is muffled in a fog of empty phrases. A system of selection of leaders at once unimaginably devilish and narrow-minded trains up its future party bigwigs in the "Castles of the Knightly Order" to become Godless, impudent, and conscienceless exploiters and executioners - blind, stupid hangers-on of the Fuhrer. We "Intellectual Workers" are the ones who should put obstacles in the path of this caste of overlords.

Soldiers at the front are regimented like schoolboys by student leaders and trainees for the post of Gauleiter, and the lewd jokes of the Gauleiters insult the honor of the women students. German women students at the university in Munich have given a dignified reply to the besmirching of their honor, and German students have defended the women in the universities and have stood firm.... That is a beginning of the struggle for our free self-determination - without which intellectual and spiritual values cannot be created. We thank the brave comrades, both men and women, who have set us brilliant examples.

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

Freedom and honor! For ten long years Hitler and his coadjutor have manhandled, squeezed, twisted, and debased these two splendid German words to the point of nausea, as only dilettantes can, casting the highest values of a nation before swine. They have sufficiently demonstrated in the ten years of destruction of all material and intellectual freedom, of all moral substance among the German people, what they understand by freedom and honor. The frightful bloodbath has opened the eyes of even the stupidest German - it is a slaughter which they arranged in the name

of "freedom and honor of the German nation" throughout Europe, and which they daily start anew.

The name of Germany is dishonored for all time if German youth does not finally rise, take revenge, and atone, smash its tormentors, and set up a new Europe of the spirit. Students! The German people look to us. As in 1813 the people expected us to shake off the Napoleonic yoke, so in 1943 they look to us to break the National Socialist terror through the power of the spirit. Beresina and Stalingrad are burning in the East. The dead of Stalingrad implore us to take action. "Up, up, my people, let smoke and flame be our sign!"

Our people stand ready to rebel against the National Socialist enslavement of Europe in a fervent new breakthrough of freedom and honor.