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RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR RESPONSES TO NAZISM
COORDINATED AND SINGULAR
ACTS OF OPPOSITION

by

KATHRYN M. SULLIVAN
B.A. University of Central Florida, 2003

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of History
in the College of Arts and Humanities
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Fall Term
2006

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ABSTRACT

My intention in conducting this research is to satisfy the requirements of earning a Master of Art degree in the Department of History at the University of Central Florida. My research aim has been to examine literature written from the 1930's through 2006 which chronicles the lives of Jewish and Gentile German men, women, and children living under Nazism during the years 1933-1945. I was particularly interested and hopeful in discovering the various ways in which German females were affected by the introduction and spread of Nazi ideology.

My main goal was to sort through the features of everyday life to extricate the often subtle ways Germans rebuffed conformity to Nazism. And as the research commenced, it became increasingly necessary to acknowledge and distinguish the ongoing historical debate about what aspects of non-conformity are acceptably considered "resistance" among contemporary historians also analyzing this period. The original research questions I hoped to address and discuss were these; Upon the arrival of Nazism on the heels of the Weimar Republic, how was Nazism received by German citizens; secondly, once Nazism gathered a contingent of strong support, what avenues existed for those opposed to Nazism?; and thirdly, in what ways did opposition, resistance, and non-conformance to Nazism manifest itself?

This examination focused singly on efforts and motivations of German citizens within Germany, to illuminate reactions and actions of women and children whether Jewish, Protestant, or Catholic because I feel their stories are often over-looked as being insignificant. This study further recognizes the contributions and courage of German citizens against Hitler's totalitarian regime.

This work is dedicated to the memory of all those who chose to object, defy, resist, refuse, thwart, and otherwise renounce the horrific, hateful dialogue and ideology of the *Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Arbeiterparte* (NSDAP) and who were persecuted by the regime for their efforts and actions against the Third Reich. There can never be enough recognition given, nor enough sadness felt for all they and others sacrificed and lost in the course of their lives. Their humanity towards others during the twelve years of the Third Reich humbles and uplifts the soul.

I would also like to dedicate this manuscript to Francis Bernhard Schneider. My father has offered continuous encouragement and support throughout my entire academic journey. Without his love and guidance this effort and so many others would never have been possible. Thanks Dad!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to a host of people who helped me in gathering materials, without which I would not have been able to present my research findings which follow. I surely never could have undertaken a project of this magnitude or importance without the guidance and instruction provided to me by the talented educators of the History Department at the University of Central Florida. I would especially like to recognize Dr. Carole Adams, whose exceptional advisement and mentoring has made the utmost difference in my under- and post-graduate experience. Her direction has been vital to the successful completion of this endeavor. My Master of Arts Thesis was paneled by two additional Professors who have each had a profound effect upon my understanding of history fundamentals. Dr. Hong Zhang and Dr. Richard C. Crepeau were chosen by me for their dedication to higher education and are examples of excellence as history educators. I am forever grateful for their contributions to my education.

I wish to thank the libraries and staff of the Maitland Jewish Community Center in Maitland, Florida, the University of Central Florida in Orlando, and most especially the dedicated reference librarians of the Brevard County Public Library located in Satellite Beach, Florida who have been extremely patient and kind with my numerous requests for books and research materials. My frequent (sometimes daily) requests were consistently met with friendliness and professionalism.

In the end, this work is of my own hand. It is a reflection of my own interpretations and perspectives of the research materials I have assembled. I assume all responsibility for content and judgments expressed. I have taken great care to properly notate and cite references and to accurately credit other authors whose theories, comments, and findings are presented throughout.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

BDM	<i>Bayerischer Volkspartei</i> – Federation of German Girls
BVP	<i>Bayerischer Volkspartei</i> – Bavarian People's Party
KPD	<i>Kommunistischer Partei Deutschlands</i> – German Communist Party
OdF	<i>Opfer des Faschismus</i> – Victim of Fascism
OSS	United States of America Office of Strategic Services
SA	<i>Sturmabteilung</i> – German Storm Troopers
SPD	<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i> – German Social Democratic Party
SS	<i>Schutzstaffel</i> – "Protective Squadron" including Waffen Combat Arm

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

German men and women faced great ethical and emotional conflicts during the 1930's when attempting to equate their religious beliefs against the inhumanity and the toll exacted of National Socialism upon the German people. Christianity and "enlightened humanism" for many conscientious Germans created a moral reckoning in the minds and hearts of countless German citizens who deplored the persecution of "good Germans." Non-religious ethical systems based on German culture, enlightened humanism of educated Germans, and even those among the working-class with Socialist ideals and traditions of cooperation found various means of taking conscious steps to subvert what they believed to be unjust treatment and persecution meted out by the Nazis.

This examination purposely uses the framework of religion as the underlying skeleton from which National Socialism was allowed to flesh itself out upon a "re-birthed" German patriotism after the collapse of the Weimar Republic. The Protestant and Catholic Churches failed to intercede wholeheartedly on behalf of untold millions and failed to uphold their sacred moral doctrines to safeguard human life. This author believes the religious factor in Nazi Germany is fundamental to understanding the basis of how Nazism developed and intends to demonstrate that the Churches were culpable in allowing Nazism to fester and become what it became. Through the weakening, and subsequent failure of German value systems, persecution at the hands of the Nazis was permitted *nearly* unchallenged. The importance of this aspect upon my thesis explains why religion remains a continuing theme throughout this body of work and why those who *chose* to challenge Nazism must be acknowledged as resisters.

An abundance of literature has been written about the Third Reich, Adolf Hitler, and

Nazism. To some extent the other available texts discuss aspects I have pursued, such as examinations of the Catholic and Protestant religious responses to Nazism, occupied countries resistance efforts, and examinations of Allied force involvement in World War II. But for the most part, sources focusing upon religion have tended, with great regularity, to discuss post-war reactions and responsibility for the Holocaust. A devoted research project examining religious aspects, in tandem with inclusion of anti-Nazi reaction of men and women, with primary emphasis on German women, to my knowledge does not exist.

I first began to analyze literature on Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic religious denominations within Germany to identify whether documented instances of opposition had been recorded by these organized religious groups or their members. Second, I explored the literature for details relating to the moral and conscience dilemma faced by Catholic nuns and female caregivers administering to the “socially sick” and the euthanasia programs of the Third Reich to discern in what ways, if any, resistance emerged in the discharge of duties. Thirdly, I examined the memoirs of Germans to learn of their recollections of school behavior and ways in which university, theological, and elementary educational systems conformed or acted in non-conformance to Nazi ideology.

Many of the memoirs procured during this study offered incredible recollections of life as a child in Nazi Germany. From various perspectives, whether Jewish or Gentile, the comments and reactions of their educators and educational programs to Nazi ideology provide a valuable insight of people who attended school in Nazi Germany. The other supporting sources assembled in the bibliography include memoirs and diaries of Jewish and Gentile women of various ages and walks of life. It was hoped that these texts would contain instances of daily life, and would provide a unique glimpse of the actions and efforts of those who sought to oppose and

resist Nazism, while also demonstrating what daily life was like for the average German citizen.

I have undertaken a research approach which attempts to further elaborate upon the various definitions of resistance within scholarly research circles. Gaining a greater understanding of the dynamics surrounding examinations of Nazi Germany and World War II will illuminate the historical and investigative challenges which prevail. This research endeavor was supported by various texts which were assembled to effectively pursue a dedicated interpretation of various levels of resistance and non-conformity to Nazism, occurring in Germany during the years 1933-1945. Specifically, it was expected that information about the roles of Protestant and Catholic women who took it upon themselves to thwart Nazi directives would emerge, along with efforts Jewish women and children undertook to confront Nazism. It was expected that the comprehensive project and final summations presented herein would contain some elements consistent with previous findings on the subject of resistance.

Another characteristic of this endeavor which I initially felt differed from previous research was that it combined multiple religious motivations under the theme of resistance, and thus it was hoped the findings would be highly revealing in nature. Of the numerous texts which already exist examining resistance efforts during World War II, most are from the perspective of the occupied nations under Nazi control, and how these nations and their citizens attempted to overthrow the yoke of Nazism. This examination focused singly on efforts and motivations of German citizens within Germany, and specifically intends to illuminate reactions and actions of women and children; whether Jewish, Protestant, or Catholic. This study further recognizes their contributions and courage when faced with Hitler's totalitarian regime.

Finally, I would like to make aware to the reader that as I concluded writing this manuscript a calculation was made categorizing the primary sources resistance motivations;

religious, ethical humanism, or other. In conducting this analysis of the primary source research materials, all of the sources seemed to be motivated by factors defined as “ethical resistance,” with two (2) sources falling into resistance efforts in the pre-1937 period, four (4) sharing both pre and post-1937 periods, and thirteen (13) falling into the post-1937 time period. The primary sources seem to indicate that as conditions for those around them deteriorated, German people were motivated to intervene on behalf of friends and neighbors who were being threatened and persecuted by Nazism. A scientific study was not conducted to substantiate these findings and the findings are being suggested by me solely in relation to the other evidence that is presented herein for the reader’s consideration.

CHAPTER TWO: WHAT IS RESISTANCE? A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It is not necessary to hope in order to undertake;
nor to succeed in order to persevere. – Prince of Orange

No regime ever governs unopposed. A Dictatorship forces opposition underground, where it may be residual or may crystallize into a dangerous conspiracy designed to overthrow the government. – Peter Hoffman

Resistance takes various forms: armed, unarmed, and spiritual. But are these the only forms of resistance that can be associated with the word resistance? Armed resistance against Nazism involved the use of weapons; unarmed did not. Cases of armed resistance are most typically thought of when considering tactics initiated by persons in occupied countries who fought to free themselves from the yoke of German control. Cases of actual armed resistance within Nazi Germany are scant.¹

According to Frank McDonough, the three largest groups participating in resistance against the Nazi regime were Social Democrats, Communists, and industrial workers. The Social Democratic party (SPD) was banned in 1933 along with all other political parties, but its exiled leadership and activists inside Germany continued to oppose the Nazi regime. A much greater level of active resistance to Nazi rule was offered by the Communist Party (KPD), which undertook extensive underground resistance against Nazism after its suppression in 1933. Industrial workers were a third group to offer resistance to the Nazi regime.² Author Allen Welsh Dulles contends the Communist underground came to a complete halt once Stalin and

¹ Author Frank McDonough cites that less than one percent of the German population engaged in active resistance. Frank McDonough. *Opposition and Resistance in Nazi Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, 1.

Hitler made their anti-aggression pact in August 1939. Many who till then had remained steadfast and loyal deserted the Communist Party. It was not until Russia was invaded that the Communist underground revived.³

Charles Maier adds another perspective to the analysis and dialogue concerning resistance when he introduces the term, “*petite resistance*,” originally meant to instill a more defiant stance than that suggested by the recent German concept of *Resistenz*, which to Maier seems, “so elastic that it can cover almost any gesture of nonenthusiasm.” He clarifies further by saying he is referring to outright gestures of opposition, but of a decentralized and “nonconcerted” origin. Specifically, *petite resistance* amounted to the selective noncompliance of workers, women, and various stubborn and decent individuals who did not want to knuckle under.⁴

According to Klemens von Klemperer, historicizing resistance, however necessary, should not stop short of the dimension of individual motivation. Large groups as such did not and could not offer resistance. He feels the assumption that one can expect resistance *en bloc* from German industrialists, officers, or the clergy is altogether fallacious. He furthers this by saying, if anything, such groups were naturally disposed to conform, if not collaborate. At best these groups practiced partial *Resistenz*.⁵ Confounding his erstwhile regard for individual effort, it would appear from von Klemperer’s previous assertions of what constitutes “resistance” he favors the grandeur of larger-scale “traditional” efforts. He is slightly contradictory at times.

² McDonough, 3.

³ Allen Welsh Dulles. *Germany’s Underground*, New York: Da Capo Press, 2000, 99.

⁴ Charles Maier. “German Resistance in Perspective,” in *Contending with Hitler: Varieties of German Resistance in the Third Reich*, edited by David C. Large. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 143.

⁵ Klemens von Klemperer. “The Solitary Witness,” in *Contending with Hitler: Varieties of German Resistance in the Third Reich*, edited by David C. Large. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 135.

Martin Broszat presents the results of his attempt to derive an understanding of resistance and the broad variety of attitudes he encountered toward it in an essay titled, “A Social and Historical Typology of the German Opposition to Hitler.” Firstly, Broszat believes the long-standing, exclusive definition of resistance, focusing only upon exceptional cases of fundamental and active opposition, has produced an idealized and undifferentiated picture of German resistance. Secondly, he finds scholarship has largely ignored the primacy of change within the resistance and interdependence between it and the Nazi regime, and the relationship between the two has been falsely presented as both static and clearly antagonistic. Thirdly, he encourages a revised definition of resistance that includes the less heroic cases of partial, passive, ambivalent, and broken opposition – one that accounts for the fragility of resistance and the inconsistency of human bravery. And finally, a discriminating analysis of the broad spectrum of resistance activities cannot ignore the social context within which these activities occurred.⁶

Recently, however, the stark image of a monolithic “Resistance” has yielded (among Marxists and liberals) as the historical profession itself has shifted its perspectives. Oral histories, memoirs by victims, and local history projects have blurred sharp contrasts between resistance and collaboration.⁷ “Resistance” loses its capital R.”⁸ Claudia Koonz contends, over

⁶ Martin Broszat. “A Social and Historical Typology of the German Opposition to Hitler,” in *Contending with Hitler: Varieties of German Resistance in the Third Reich*, edited by David C. Large. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 25.

⁷ David Patterson has conducted extensive research into two primary categories of autobiography – memoir and diary and suggests significant differences should be kept in mind when using these texts as historical references. He specifically writes about the differences in context of Holocaust memoirs and interpretation gleaned from them. His essay makes for interesting reading. For additional information see, David Patterson. “Through the Eyes of Those Who Were There,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Volume 18, Number 2 (2004) 274-290. See also, Jeremy D. Popkin. “Holocaust Memories, Historians’ Memoirs: First-Person Narrative and the Memory of the Holocaust,” *History & Memory*, Volume 15, Number 1 (2003) 49-84.

⁸ Claudia Koonz. “Ethical Dilemmas and Nazi Eugenics: Single-Issue Dissent in Religious Contexts*” (This essay is based on the essay entitled, “Eugenics, Gender, and Ethics in Nazi Germany: The Debate about Involuntary Sterilization, 1933-1936” by Claudia Koonz which appeared originally in Thomas Childers and Jane Caplan (eds.),

the years a new view of the Nazi state has emerged from the previous clean-cut concept of organized and centralized resistance. Through this new view, resistance research reveals many levels of German resistance(s). She demonstrates the English term “resist” remains the same; it comes from the Latin *resistere*, to stand firm. In German, *Widerstand* “to stand against,” underscores inflexible strength.⁹ Martyn Housden maintains it is imperative to start with the historians dispute/debate about how the word ‘resistance’ should be used. Authors such as Ian Kershaw originally associated the term more or less solely to highly motivated political activists who organized to overthrow the Third Reich.¹⁰

According to dictionary definitions of *resist* used by Housden, he discerns that someone who ‘strived against’ the Third Reich (as Claus von Stauffenberg did) certainly resisted it; but so did a person who simply ‘refused to comply’ with its demands (perhaps a party member who also went to church). Likewise, according to the dictionary definition, someone who ‘prevented’ Nazi ideas from ‘penetrating’ his or her mind (maybe a member of an SPD discussion group) was also a resister, and so was a person who just remained ‘unaffected’ by the new system. The examples are numerous, but the immediate issue is this; how narrowly or broadly should historians define “resistance” activity?¹¹

Consider H.A. Jacobson’s historian interpretation of what constitutes ‘resistance,’ he maintains the following, in what Housden deems a “broad interpretation,”

Reevaluating the Third Reich, New York: Holmes & Meier, 1992). As quoted by, Michael Geyer and John W. Boyer. *Resistance Against the Third Reich: 1933-1990*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, 15.

⁹ Claudia Koonz. “Choice and Courage,” in *Contending with Hitler: Varieties of German Resistance in the Third Reich*, edited by David Clay Large. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 49.

¹⁰ Ian Kershaw. *The Nazi Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, London: Edward Arnold, 3rd edition, 1993, 150.

¹¹ Martyn Housden, 161. The dictionary definition referenced by Housden is, Pocket Oxford Dictionary, 1969, p. 704.

The concept of resistance must comprise all that was done despite the terror of the Third Reich, despite the suffering and martyrdom, for the sake of humanity, for the aid of the persecuted. And the word resistance in some cases applies, too, to certain forms of standing aside in silence.

To counter this “broad” academic interpretation, Housden provides Kershaw’s analysis which balances Jacobson’s interpretations through a warning that if classifications of every thought and deed directed against the Third Reich are to be considered ‘resistance,’ then we risk diluting our understanding of what it really was ‘to resist.’¹² He proposes instead the following terminology to define ‘resistance.’

Resistance – active participation in *organized* attempts to work against the regime with the conscious aim of undermining it or planning for the moment of its demise.

Opposition – a wider concept comprising many forms of action with partial and limited aims, not directed against Nazism as a system and in fact sometimes stemming from individuals or groups broadly sympathetic towards the regime and its ideology.

Dissent – the voicing of attitudes frequently spontaneous and often unrelated to any intended action, which in any way whatsoever ran counter to or were critical of Nazism.

In her essay in honor of scholar Peter Hoffmann’s writings¹³, Jill Stephenson writes the following,

A liberal interpretation of the term “resistance” in the Third Reich would, however, also encompass more mundane and less spectacular activities or single deeds by individuals, small groups or tight-knot communities, to frustrate the will of officers of the Nazi dictatorship. Much of what falls into this category contends Stephenson would be regarded merely as

¹² Ian Kershaw. *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983, 2-4.

¹³ Jill Stephenson. “‘Resistance’ to ‘No Surrender’: Popular Disobedience in Württemberg in 1945,” in *German Against Nazism: Nonconformity, Opposition and Resistance in the Third Reich*, edited by Francis R. Nicosia and Lawrence D. Stokes. New York: Berg, 1990, 351-368.

“dissent” or, at most, “disobedience” in a pluralistic polity. In the Third Reich, however, it can legitimately be designated “resistance,” because that was how despotic Nazi leaders perceived it.

Author Peter Wyden says it was his mother who proved to be the driving force in deciding the family should emigrate to escape the declining fortunes of Jews in Berlin. He claims this decisiveness was not at all unusual for the times. He says German women often displayed more energy and enterprise than the men. “Women’s lib” had little to do with it. It all boiled down to a woman’s ability to be less status-conscious, less money-oriented, and more confident of her ability to flourish in new surroundings. As it was, few German women owned a business, a law office, or a medical practice they would have to abandon, this allowed women to be less cautious in these matters according to Wyden.¹⁴

Marion Kaplan speaks to women’s subordinate status in the public world during the 1930s.¹⁵ Kaplan comments that women’s focus on the household may have made them more amenable to the kinds of work they would have to perform in places of refuge.¹⁶ Kaplan touches upon a unique theory of women’s placement within 1930’s society, amid the volumes of literature which chronicle resistance to the Third Reich. Her theory is crucial to developing an understanding and appreciation for the gendered differences of male and female resistance, and also reminds us of the gendered sensibilities affecting German women, whether they were Jews or Gentiles. Kaplan’s gendered analyses have been furthered by authors such as Claudia Koonz.

¹⁴ Peter Wyden. *Stella*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992, 47.

¹⁵ For additional reading concerning women’s status within the Confessing Church see, Victoria Barnett. *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest Against Hitler*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, 74-77. For additional reading concerning views of women and gender within the German Christians see, Doris L. Bergen. “Storm Troopers of Christ: The German Christian Movement and the Ecclesiastical Final Solution,” in *Betrayal: German Churches and the Holocaust*, edited by Robert P. Ericksen and Susannah Heschel. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999, 40-67, specifically page 48.

In Koonz's essay "Choice and Courage" she asserts that because resistance was in most cases 'non-violent,' the resistance which occurred was dependent upon qualities associated with women: communication skills; insight into the enemy's weaknesses; ability to provide food, shelter, and moral support; and finally, skill at smuggling.¹⁷ Koonz's essay highlights many fundamental and critical theories which facilitate a better deciphering of resistance; underlying this worthwhile dialogue is the need for redefinition of resistance and for recognition of women who acted in defiance, opposition, non-conformity, and resistance to the Third Reich.¹⁸

She has chosen to focus she says on women and resistance but feels it is vital to add a separate category for the "opponent" – a person who acted to thwart a particular policy that touched his or her own daily life, while assenting in general to Nazi aims and ideals.¹⁹ Koonz elaborates on this premise in another essay titled, "Consequences: Women, Nazis, and Moral Choice."²⁰ While discussing society outside Nazi surveillance, Koonz writes, among victims as among resisters, individuals were unified behind a common goal.

...In the camps as in the underground outside, women brought special skills to the errand, and the public-private split worked to their advantage. From childhood, they had learned to live in a bicultural world that severed the public persona from private feelings; as resisters, they "instinctively" knew how to appear harmless and even obsequious to their enemies while maintaining their inner integrity...Resistance meant long-term, collaborative deviousness – pitting wit, not physical power, against the enemy. This quintessentially "feminine" strategy became universal in

¹⁶ Kaplan, 201.

¹⁷ Claudia Koonz. "Choice and Courage," in *Contending with Hitler: Varieties of German Resistance in the Third Reich*, edited by David Clay Large. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 60.

¹⁸ For additional reading about women and men who participated in various forms of opposition and resistance to the Nazism see, Annedore Leber. Annedore Leber. *Conscience in Revolt: Sixty-Four Stories of Resistance in German 1933-1945*, London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1957. In this volume Leber presents eight women who demonstrated courage and fortitude in their confrontations with the Third Reich in the support of Jews, political ideology, and freedom.

¹⁹ Koonz, 51.

²⁰ Claudia Koonz. "Consequences: Women, Nazis, and Moral Choice," in *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*, edited by Carol Rittner and John K. Roth. New York: Paragon House, 1993, 293.

situations where resisters and prisoners commanded few of the superficial attributes of normal life and dignity.

The acts and occurrences of defiance, which in so many ways are at the heart of this examination, can at time be easily disguised and oft over-looked. The actor in each case may not have had any true desire to change the status quo, and may have actually benefited from employment opportunity and lack of commercial competition; but yet may have acted upon a momentary qualm which challenged a personal moral or spiritual inclination.²¹

Gisela Bock points to the increased incidence of pregnancy during the Third Reich, not merely as an encouraging leap in motherhood to benefit the Reich. On the contrary she suggests it was a means for thousands of women to “consciously manipulate” their pregnancies as the only alternative to avoid forced employment. Her theory is support by the official Nazi reaction to these women, which was to denounce and accuse the women of “lack of comprehension of the necessity of war.”²²

The plans and schemes to oust Hitler and the Nazis are purported to have been rampant at various times during the reign of the Third Reich. But realistically speaking, armed resistance was typically limited to skirmishes in concentration camps located throughout Germany; the camps remained the few locations in Germany where armed resistance manifested itself.²³ Life in the camps became an actual life and death circumstance, especially in the later years of the Reich. In dire conditions, active and physical resistance; combined with all measure of defiance

²¹ For additional reading see, Ruth Andreas-Friedrich. *Berlin Underground 1938-1945*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947, 196.

²² Gisela Bock. “Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany. Motherhood: Compulsory Sterilization and the State,” in *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*, edited by Carol Rittner and John K. Roth. New York: Paragon House, 1993, 168.

were exhibited.²⁴ The assassination attempts on Hitler's life are well-documented. These forms of calculated schemes and plots constitute the bulk of armed resistance to Nazism within Nazi Germany.²⁵ There is general agreement that resistance should not be measured merely by the criteria of its outward success. Rather, our own experience of dictatorships, as well as more detailed knowledge we now have of the conditions under which the anti-Hitler plotters operated, teaches us that without the backing of a military or governmental organization, their chances of bringing down the regime from within were virtually non-existent.²⁶

Aside from armed or unarmed resistance, there also was a method of willful and conscious spiritual resistance which concerned the refusal of a person to be morally crushed by the Nazis. Resistance in this instance occurred wherever Nazis imposed their rule or demanded subjugation and abandonment of religious or moral belief. Spiritual resistance was the unwillingness to accept Nazi definitions of time and human worth, among other things. This could be as simple as remembering the Sabbath, or refusing to mistreat a fellow inmate in a camp, and includes the technique of "inner-emigration," which implies systematic mental withdraw inward toward inclinations of humanistic enlightenment - outward appearance of accord while internally they are opposed. This feature became for many Germans the only way

²³ Patrick Henry. "Madeleine Dreyfus, Jewish Activity, Righteous Jews," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* Volume 7, Number 1 (2004) 137-138, 134-146.

²⁴ Camp Resistance is well documented. For further reading see, Anna Heilman and Rose Meth, *Resistance* in "Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust," edited by Carol Rittner and John K. Roth. New York: Paragon House, 1993, 130; also Gisela Perl, *A Doctor in Auschwitz* in the same volume, 104. Also, Len Crome. *Unbroken: Resistance and Survival in the Concentration Camps*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1988, or Lucien Steinberg. *Jews Against Hitler (Not as a Lamb)*, London: Gordon & Cremonesi, 1970, 271-299, and Brana Gurewitsch. *Mothers, Sisters, Resisters: Oral Histories of Women Who Survived the Holocaust*, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998.

²⁵ For additional reading see, Peter Hoffmann. "Problems of Resistance in National Socialist Germany," in *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust*, edited by Franklin H. Littell and Hubert G. Locke. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974, 102, 97-113.

they could distance themselves from the deplorable moral and ethical persecution happening around them. Educating oneself and celebrating one's culture are also considered spiritual resistance. Cultural activities continued in secret, even in the camps. Artists, musicians, actors, and singers kept creating and performing. Poets wrote of the suffering going on around them.

In many instances Jews especially felt the creation of a written record documenting what they were witnessing and being subjected to, was a form of resistance. The ability to have their lives and circumstances "live on" through literature was an opportunity to "survive" and defy total annihilation. Finding a way to survive the unimaginable odds against them, also gave the impetus to many Jews that surviving the Nazis was the ultimate in resistance. People in hiding would teach their children to read and to write and to understand their religious heritage. In this way, Jews resisted the Nazi idea that they were worthless and sustained their lives and culture. But German Jews were not alone in their religious struggle, as Jehovah's Witnesses were also forced to submit to Nazism along with Protestants and Catholics throughout Germany.

At other times, spiritual resistance was defined as holding firmly to the belief that, no matter how powerful the Nazis were, God was still in control and would help His people. Non-Jews undertook spiritual resistance as well. Many Polish priests were imprisoned in Dachau,²⁷ and some secretly celebrated Mass. Jehovah's Witnesses imprisoned in concentration camps for their failure to renounce their faith continued to study and teach their beliefs along with Protestant ministers and Catholic priests who were also imprisoned for religious sensibilities

²⁶ Hans Mommsen. *Alternatives to Hitler: German Resistance under the Third Reich*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000, 24.

²⁷ Inside Dachau, the prisoners were a mixed lot. The triangle on a uniform marked each person. Gypsies had brown triangles; political prisoners, red. The greens were the most feared. They were criminals who had been sent to Dachau. Often they were the block elders or worked in the administration. Jehovah's Witnesses wore purple triangles; homosexuals, pink. The Jews had two yellow triangles arranged into a Jewish star.

which countered the state. Many of those who practiced spiritual resistance, like those who fought with physical resistance and weapons, did not survive the Nazis.

Some were able to rebuke the Nazis even when all hope for their own lives were lost. For example, one girl being led to her death in a group of Jews saw the typical cruelty of a German guard, who was pushing people roughly into a pit upon others; she turned to the guard and slapped him hard in the face.²⁸ In cities, ghettos, and camps people risked their own lives to resist and help themselves and others. In forests and cities throughout Europe resistance fighters, known as partisans, gathered and banded together in their opposition of Nazism. Many of the men and women who gathered as partisans in the struggle to gain freedom from the Nazis were caught, terrorized, and, executed by Hitler's SS troops.

Those who fought for human rights against Nazi injustice came to call themselves "the illegals." Where injustice had become law, normal standards and values were reversed, and those who stood for uprightness and humanity were lawbreakers in the Nazi state. Over a period of twelve years almost three million Germans were in and out of concentration camps and penitentiaries for political reasons – sometimes for as little as a remark critical of the state. About eight hundred thousand German citizens were arrested and became political prisoners at one time or another during the Nazi period; approximately three hundred thousand of them were still alive after the war.²⁹

The part played by women in regard to resistance of course varied in form and

²⁸ Charles Anflück. *Teen Witnesses to the Holocaust: Resistance*, New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc. 1999, 51.

²⁹ Eric Boehm. *We Survived: Fourteen Histories of the Hidden and Hunted in Nazi Germany*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1985, xviii.

intensity.³⁰ Certainly the “women of the 20th July” did not match in their conspiratorial engagement such as those of the Communist and radical socialists underground such as Hilde Meisel³¹ (AKA Hilda Monte) whose persistence in coordinating exile and resistance cost her life. The “women of the 20th July,” like their husbands, came as a rule from upper middle-class or aristocratic backgrounds, and were not revolutionary activists. They were in no way geared to conspiratorial ways, neither temperamentally nor politically. When however, over the course of time and in view of the unfolding events they found opposition close to inevitable, they embarked upon and followed this course without wavering.³²

However, the role of women was not confined simply to encouraging their husbands, or giving them spiritual support. They were co-workers and confidantes, secretaries and discussion partners; and last but not least they were protectors of their families. They had the obligation to survive, if only for the sake of their children. In doing so, they dedicated their subsequent lives to the political activities of their husbands.³³ Further research remains to be done on women’s involvement in anti-Nazi activities. Claudia Koonz contends that women resister’s motivations did not spring from gender-specific concerns related to their employment or ideology (as in the case of opponents). But the form of their courage did take distinctively feminine shape according to Koonz as women used gender conventions of the period to their benefit.³⁴

³⁰ For additional reading see, Vera Laska. *Women in the Resistance and in the Holocaust: The Voices of Eyewitnesses*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983.

³¹ See Annedore Leber, *Das Gewissen steht auf*, Berlin 1960, 17ff. Meisel/Monte was a poet and writer for the Berlin paper *Der Funke* representing the Socialist International. Living in England when Hitler became Chancellor, she joined the campaign of resistance against the Nazis. She returned to Germany in 1944. Working in Vienna, she established a secret intelligence chain with a group of anti-Nazis

³² Klemens von Klemperer. Foreword in *Courageous Hearts: Women and the Anti-Hitler Plot of 1944*, Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997, vi-vii.

³³ Dorothee von Meding. *Courageous Hearts: Women and the Anti-Hitler Plot of 1944*, Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997, xi.

³⁴ Koonz, “Choice and Courage,” 59.

Author Dorothee von Meding's research of the "women of the 20th July" maintains the resistance of women was different from that of men for a variety of reasons. Prevalent female gender roles of the mid-1930s allowed "the determined women" a means to subvert the limitations society placed upon female capability and aptitude. These male-generated gendered slights towards women allowed women to be less conspicuous, more covert and more "private" in their associations and involvement with unauthorized activities.

The question of how far the women belonged to the *Widerstand* (Resistance) should thus be expressed in different terms than those for their husbands. The women, says von Meding, were not involved in active "resistance" in the strict sense, yet they kept clear of Nazism, its ideology and its organizations. Koonz' research provides evidence from Gestapo records suggesting perhaps one in five of the Germans arrested for oppositional actions were women.³⁵ She contends resistance subcultures depended on women as well as men. Although women did not act against Nazi power from distinctive motivations, their actions within resistance networks were linked to their gender. Koonz's evidence and von Meding's reactions about female involvement indicate women were involved in various forms of resistance activities, although it is not readily known how many German women were actually involved.

In a stunning memoir demonstrating continued perseverance of herself, her friends, and fellow colleagues Ruth Andreas-Friedrich's recollections from 1938-1945 are testament to the fortitude of Nazi objectors. Andreas-Friedrich reveals the obvious in her foreword, "Many whose lives were in danger would never have managed to emigrate if all Hitler's opponents had left first. Countless "wanted" persons who went underground could never have stuck it out to

³⁵ Koonz. "Choice and Courage," 59.

the end but for the help of strangers.” She was one of those strangers to many who otherwise would have fallen victim and become yet another casualty of World War II statistics.³⁶

Throughout the period her memoir details, there are nearly constant references to circumvention of official policy, assistance offered to the persecuted, and persistent opposition among a small but growing circle of like-minded individuals, to any and all things Nazi. Andreas-Friedrich chronicles daily comments of disgust and negativity encountered among the general German public, the intercessions made by herself and others on behalf of the hunted and accused within Germany, as well as schemes her group organized to disrupt Nazi objectives and thwart anti-Semitic behavior.

Combined with the significant references to her daily life within Berlin, the book furnishes a unique perspective on organizational efforts amid the ever-present fear of discovery and State retribution. Yet she also demonstrates that unlikely cooperation did occur among common German men and women. As difficult as it was to remain undetected, the only effective means of further thwarting the regime was to incorporate other active resisters to the group. This was done carefully, however, on so many occasions it could have proven to be disastrous as the group took in those who sought relief or needed safe hiding.

In a chilling diary entry of January 10, 1945 regarding Helmuth von Moltke (of the Kreisau Circle) who was much revered by Ruth Andreas-Friedrich and members of her underground group, Andreas-Friedrich penned these comments after the “People’s Court” trial,³⁷

“Count,” Freisler said, when everything was over, “Count Moltke, Christianity and National Socialism have only one thing in common. They both demand the whole man.”

³⁶ Ruth Andreas-Friedrich. *Berlin Underground 1938-1945*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947, 118.

³⁷ Andreas-Friedrich, 189.

Andreas-Friedrich writes, “The whole man. The man Moltke, the man Delp, and the man Speer. Perhaps the privilege of living is not the important thing after all. Perhaps the privilege of dying is a thousand times for important – of dying for an honest faith.”

Scholarly examination of the Nazi Regime has also produced an interesting dialogue concerning the place of women within the National Socialist ideology and about the extent and nature of women’s support for National Socialism before and after 1933. Elizabeth Harvey re-examined social history research conducted during the late 1970s throughout the 1980s which had studied the impacts of Nazi policy upon German women and whether they had been peculiarly resistant, or peculiarly susceptible to Nazism.³⁸ Scholars have attempted to discern why bourgeois feminists did not resist more effectively to the onslaught of Nazism. They also sought to explore the impact of Nazi policies after 1933 and have raised questions of whether women should be seen more as victims of a sexist regime, or as collaborators in the creation and stabilization of the Nazi state.³⁹

Through their individual analyses of the Third Reich a historical debate emerged in the mid-1980s between two female scholars with contrary views and theories of German women’s involvement and culpability during the twelve years of the Third Reich. Ralph M. Leck discusses the scholarship debate which occurred between, German historian Gisela Bock and American historian of German women Claudia Koonz. Leck furthers understanding of the debate through a well-prepared analysis of interpretation and content the scholars theorize. Leck’s essay demonstrates the Bock-Koonz debate inspired new emphasis upon gender theory,

³⁸ Elizabeth Harvey. “Visions of the *Volk*: German Women and the Far Right from Kaiserreich to Third Reich, *Journal of Women’s History* Volume 16, Number 3 (2004) 152, 152-167.

³⁹ Harvey, 152.

examinations of complicity and resistance, and studies of feminism.⁴⁰

It is vital to the content of this examination of opposition, resistance, and instances of non-conformity occurring within Nazi Germany to acknowledge the significance of the Bock-Koonz debate upon the scholarship. Through the advancement of theory and gender-awareness, Gisela Bock and Claudia Koonz have tremendously expanded the dominant male-centered historical record to demonstrate German women operated with and among various forms and instances of power dynamics. Bock and Koonz each have shown that women within Nazi Germany were affected by, and at times manipulated the powerful forces and fluctuating milieu they were living. They have each created greater awareness and furthered historical thought through their scholarly contributions.

German Historian Gisela Bock's analysis is from the German perspective and is derived from a mindset based on German culture and awareness and this author weighs these factors strongly when considering the many contentions and views Bock contends. But, I feel the American Historian Claudia Koonz possibly more accurately supports her arguments, precisely because she is not of the German mindset and is "unbound" by German influences. As previously mentioned, I believe that both authors have approached the topic with enthusiasm and all researchers and historians benefit for the contributions of Bock and Koonz in the scholarly literature.

An inconsistency to the perceived general reaction of Nazism upon Germans is presented by Fraü Martha Brixius to her interviewer Alison Owings. In recalling the April 1933 boycott of Jewish shops, Brixius tells how her mother approached the boycott with disregard. "She always

⁴⁰ Ralph M. Leck. "Conservative Empowerment and the Gender of Nazism: Paradigms of Power and Complicity in

went into Jewish stores, even when the SA stood out front to see who entered.” Once I went in with her. SA men in uniform stood outside. “My mother really gave me courage.”

Owings was told that this particular Jewish merchant was someone from whom one could buy sewing needles and cloth. “It was terrible” recalls Brixius, to enter the large store and find it completely empty. The owner came over to us. He was so *thankful* that someone *came*. My mother really had nothing to buy, but wanted to show him, “I’m still coming.” So mother bought two small spools of thread.⁴¹ The contradiction to this story lies in the choice of the mother to willfully shop in a boycotted store, while refusing to shop at the Nazi-owned stores, despite the urge to buy from them. Brixius comments, “Those are such *small* things one could do. It’s really only that one relinquished something, but one did nothing active. Not that.”

Perhaps, as these former examples indicate, gaining an understanding of what constitutes resistance is not entirely such a simple matter, as one might initially conclude. Especially considering the multitude of ways opposition, resistance, disobedience, and non-conformity manifest during the twelve years of National Socialism, when weighted against the retrospective criticism placed upon “otherwise decent German people” to have done something more to offset the inconceivable inhumanity and persecution meted out by the Nazis. In the conclusion of his book Philip Friedman writes of Hitler, “All men were his victims: the innocent, those who helped him, those who opposed him, those who closed their eyes and minds and hearts.”⁴²

It is my intention through analysis of the gathered literature to offer clearer definitions of

German Women’s History,” *Journal of Women’s History* Volume 12, Number 2 (2000) 147, 147-169.

⁴¹ Alison Owings. *Frauen: German Women Recall the Third Reich*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993, 200.

⁴² Philip Friedman. *Their Brother’s Keepers*, New York: Holocaust Library, 1978, 180.

resistance, opposition, and non-conformity. Thus, a greater awareness can be realized to explain and define the various instances which occurred during the Third Reich to challenge it.

CHAPTER THREE: RELIGIOUS RESPONSE TO NAZISM

Part I Early Period – Pre- 1937

The Protestant Churches in the year 1933 have seen their
greatest gift from God. – Paul Althaus.

In the realm of Protestant theology, the 1920s have become known as the formative years for Karl Barth's dialectic theology, but far more dominant in Germany at the time was the trend toward nationalistic political theology. Steeped in natural theology, political theologians like Emmanuel Hirsch, Werner Elert, Paul Althaus, Wilhelm Stapel, and Gerhard Kittel exalted race – in this case, the German *Volk* – as the preeminent divinely created order.⁴³ Many believed Christianity in Europe was in trouble as secular views increased, in France especially, but overall the general view was that Christianity was in crisis. Hirsch, Althaus, and Barth have each in their own way influenced twentieth century political theology through their actions and reactions to German nationalistic Christianity and Nazism.⁴⁴

Hirsch and Althaus came to represent the antithesis of Christian charity and swarmed to National Socialism with full and unwavering support. Barth and others took the opposite stance and challenged themselves and Christian doctrine to surmount the crisis which befell Protestantism mid-twentieth century. Theologians in support of the tenets of the Confessing Church such as, Martin Niemöller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer have become synonymous with anti-

⁴³ Kyle T. Jantzen. "National Socialism as a Force for German Protestant Renewal?" in *Christian Responses to the Holocaust*, Edited by Donald J. Dietrich. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003, 53.

⁴⁴ For additional reading on the contributions and legacy of Karl Barth upon church dialectic see, Canon John Nurser. "The 'Ecumenical Movement' Churches, 'Global Order,' and Human Rights: 1938-1948," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Volume 25, Number 4 (2003) 846, 841-881.

Nazist rhetoric and their activities in defiance of Nazi ideology are well-documented.⁴⁵ In the early 1930s Bonhoeffer imagined the church as an agent of resistance towards the growing trends of anti-Semitism being promulgated by national socialists. He practiced “pacifist resistance” which included avoidance of military service, admonitions against world war, preaching against German rearmament, and working for peace.

During the waning years of the Weimar Republic the platform of the Social Democrats declared that public funding for both Protestant and Catholic churches should cease. Churchmen feared the central place the church had occupied in the old order would end. Since both Protestant and Catholic churches operated with special legal status, *Körperschaft des Öffentlichen Rechts*,⁴⁶ churches benefited from similar status as most other government departments. The importance of Christianity and its existence as a divinely-ordained institution was clearly understood within the organizational apparatus of the German churches. But fears funding would cease caused immediate reaction among church officials and pastors who were civil servants.⁴⁷ Religious education for German youth, along with growing divisions among theologians over Christian versus nationalistic doctrine became persistent issues of unresolved discontent.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ James Bentley has authored an in-depth examination of the life of Martin Niemöller. See, *Martin Niemöller: 1892-1984*, New York: Free Press, a Division of MacMillan, Inc., 1984.

⁴⁶ Freedom of religion in Germany is guaranteed by article 4 of the Grundgesetz stating that "the freedom of religion, conscience and the freedom of confessing one's religious or philosophical beliefs are inviolable. Uninfringed religious practice is guaranteed. Historically, though, all German states (Länder) are closely connected with either the Catholic or a Protestant (Lutheran and/or Reformed) confession. This has legal and cultural influences up to present times and this makes other countries or organizations sometimes doubt the actual separation between state and church or even the actual state of religious freedom in Germany.

⁴⁷ Shelley Osmun Baranowski. *The Limits of Discontent: The Confessing Church in Germany, 1933-1939*. Dissertation. Princeton: Princeton University, 1980, 5, 12.

⁴⁸ Author Michael E. O'Sullivan presents a unique analysis of Catholic life and the conscription of Catholic Youth in forced Nazi Labor Services, Land Year Programs, and Land Service. His essay examines dissatisfaction with the regime through public ritual; exploration of extent of relationship of the institutional Church to its youth members;

A conflict between conservative elites and national socialists for control of the German Evangelical Church was underway in the 1930s and continued through the coming decade, finally subsiding at war's end when churches operated without immediate State intervention.⁴⁹ The Confessing Church emerged from the theological debates that raged within Protestantism, specifically aiming to affirm the basic tenets of the Christian faith. The Confessing Church was opposed to the political tactics and secularization of theology brought about by Nazi sympathizing. Baronowski contends early political cooperation which elites and national socialists achieved, however slight, resulted more from necessity than from harmony. She maintains that most elites agreed to Hitler's Chancellorship because his party was the only right-wing alternative to the declining fortunes of the Weimar conservatives.

The real or imagined failures of the Weimar period became the impetus for Germans to support enthusiastically anything that showed promise and an emphasis leading away from economic crisis. Greater Germany and the whole of Europe were still recovering from economic losses, loss of life, and for Germany, the stigma of defeat brought on during World War I. Beset by costly reparations Germans were driven to self-reflection. The moral fiber of German pride, nationalism, and the superiority of the German people were searchingly desperate for recompense from degradation meted out during Versailles; National Socialism appeared to many to be exactly what was needed to get Germany back on track.⁵⁰

and a Diaspora of Catholics separated from their homes and churches. For additional reading see, Michael E. O'Sullivan. "An Eroding Milieu? Catholic Youth, Church Authority, and Popular Behavior In northwest Germany During the Third Reich, 1933-1938," *The Catholic Historical Review*, Volume 90, Number 2 (2004) 236-259.

⁴⁹ For additional reading see, Ernst Christian Helmreich. *The German Churches under Hitler: Background, Struggle, and Epilogue*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979.

⁵⁰ For additional reading about German identity and the relationships between nationalism and German self-identification see, Martin Menke. "They Will Be Done: German Catholics and National Identity in the Twentieth Century," *The Catholic Historical Review* Volume 91, Number 2 (2005) 300-320.

An interesting feature which surfaces while conducting examinations of organized religion, are the various references to the numbers of parishioners and members who attended church during this period. The numbers are clearly conflicted among sources; some contend membership was down and that women made up the greatest group of church-goers. Other sources such as Spicer mention that Coppenrath's church, St. Mathias in Berlin had an active membership of over 15,000 parishioners. In light of Coppenrath's personal confrontations with Nazi tyranny, it is important to note the supportive reactions of his parishioners to his brushes with the Gestapo.

By mid-1934, Coppenrath's previous acceptance of National Socialism as an exciting means to the revival of the German Reich, gave way to his conclusion that Nazism could not be blindly trusted. Nazism harbored a dark side which consisted of deceit and murder. Coppenrath used his pulpit to detail his encounters with the Gestapo and to educate his flock about the changing political conditions affecting them all. His parishioners gave him constant support, according to Spicer. For instance, he mentions upon Coppenrath's return from jail over his failure to fly the Nazi flag at St. Mathias, he was greeted by his parishioners offering well-wishes in person, in written letters, and through telephone calls. They even sent flowers and took up a collection to help defray the 50 RM court fines he had been assessed.⁵¹

In response to the Nazi onslaught of slanderous attacks, Catholic nuns and priests launched counter-offensives. Priests not only exposed the injudiciousness of the clerical "immorality" trials to which they had been subjected, but also called attention to the many examples of official corruption in the Nazis "Brown Babylon." Priests and nuns encouraged

⁵¹ Spicer, 48.

their flocks to retain the traditional *Grüß Gott* (*greet God*) greeting, instead of the politically correct “*Heil Hitler*,” and to display church flags rather than swastika banners on days of national celebration. Local clerics made traditional Catholic festivals occasions for demonstrations of Catholic solidarity.⁵² American Ambassador to Germany, William Edward Dodd believed that “if all folk of the Christian Faith would hold firmly together, they would succeed,” i.e. in preventing Nazi intervention. However, he continues, “how can they cooperate when communication with one another is almost impossible?”⁵³ Lack of communication between groups who defied Hitler and the lack of other forms of communication other than official Nazi publications posed a formidable obstacle to any attempts or wishes to unify a counter action.⁵⁴

Historians J.S. Conway and F. Zipfel both concluded that even though Hitler may have been fundamentally hostile to the Christian churches by 1933, he had no definite idea of how to proceed against them. In 1933, 62.7 percent of the population (i.e., over 40 million people) belonged to one of the country’s twenty-eight independent Protestant churches, and 32.4 percent of Germans (almost 22 million people) were Catholic. If anything, Catholicism was the better organized of the two denominations. While 700,000 individuals were affiliated to a multitude of Protestant youth groups, Catholic Youth accounted for 1.5 million members.⁵⁵

Munich’s much larger Catholic community for instance, had in contrast with the

⁵² Large, 295.

⁵³ William Edward Dodd. *Through Embassy Eyes*, New York: Harcourt Brace, Inc. 1941, 185.

⁵⁴ James Altus Newell. *Protestants Against Hitler: The Conflict in the Nazi Regime between Adolf Hitler and the Confessing Church*, Mississippi: Mississippi University Press, 1966, 50-52.

⁵⁵ Martyn Housden. *Resistance and Conformity in the Third Reich*, London: Routledge, 1997, 46. For source information presented by Housden see, J.S. Conway. *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches: 1933-45*, London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1968, 1; F. Zipfel. *Kirchenkampf in Deutschland 1933-45*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965, 8; and U. Hehl. “Das Kirchenvolk im Dritten Reich,” in K. Gotto and K. Repgen (eds), *Kirche, Katholiken und Nationalsozialismus*, Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald, 1980, 63.

Protestants, shown considerable ambivalence toward National Socialism during the Weimar era. The community's leader, Cardinal Faulhaber, had combined condemnation of the Weimar system with attacks on Nazi vulgarity, radicalism, and violent anti-Semitism. In 1931, disturbed by what he perceived as anti-Christian tendencies among the Hitlerites, Faulhaber forbade priests from joining the movement. His early criticisms of the Nazis would soften by 1933 when Faulhaber made no effort to support the *Bayerischer Volkspartei*⁵⁶ (Bavarian People's Party BVP) when the Nazis forced it to disband; indeed, he suggested it dissolve itself. The "era of the parties is over anyway," he declared.⁵⁷

Catholic bishops met to work out common responses and policies in the fall of 1933 in reaction to these and other issues. The Bishops supported the Nazi pronatalist policies because these were social goals which Catholics approved; the Bishops also had no major problems towards the aggressive government stance against disease, abortion, birth control. But, the eugenic policies which were to be enacted later, caused consternation because they signaled state intervention into a sphere that the bishops regarded as purely religious.⁵⁸

Gentiles with a conscience were persistently bewildered and morally-tested as new and ever more frightening situations began to unfold. Martyn Housden says effectively Germans

⁵⁶ Bavarian People's Party (Bayerische Volkspartei) was the Bavarian branch of the Centre Party, which broke off from the rest of the party in 1919 to pursue a more conservative, more Catholic, more Bavarian particularist course. There was a period of near separatism in the early 20s, culminating in the government of Gustav von Kahr's unwillingness to abide by rulings from Berlin during the inflation crisis of 1923. This only came to an end with the shock of Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch. Following the establishment of a more stable situation throughout Germany, the party came around to a more moderate line under the leadership of Heinrich Held. The party may be seen as a precursor to the Christian Social Union in Bavaria.

⁵⁷ David Clay Large. *Where Ghosts Walked: Munich's Road to the Third Reich*, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997, 246.

⁵⁸ Claudia Koonz. "Ethical Dilemmas and Nazi Eugenics: Single-Issue Dissent in Religious Contexts*" (This essay is based on the essay entitled, "Eugenics, Gender, and Ethics in Nazi Germany: The Debate about Involuntary Sterilization, 1933-1936" by Claudia Koonz which appeared originally in Thomas Childers and Jane Caplan (eds.),

carried out a whole variety of activities against aspects of the Third Reich; ranging from verbal complaints to assassination attempts, from the distribution of leaflets to an attempted *coup d'etat*.⁵⁹ And that the people involved were also highly heterogeneous, but scholar Lucien Steinberg contends anti-Nazi resistance could only have been brought about by two categories of people and groups. The militants of parties and movements opposed to Nazism who had managed to escape arrest, and the individuals and groups who, having put their trust in Nazism, and given it more or less their full support, then broke away.⁶⁰

In the first category were men and movements that could be classified as leftist including a small number of Christians, more Protestants than Catholics, and also quite a large number of Jews. Most of the Jewish members of the German resistance belonged to left-wing political groups, in particular to the various Socialist splinter groups, the Social Democratic Party of the epoch being very much divided, and to the Communist Party.⁶¹ The second category was quite different: gradually built up over the years it consisted of some Conservatives, a number of more or less extremist Nationalists, and a handful of Liberals; it had managed to win over several army officers, who came to represent the group who attempted the 20 July 1944 plot against Hitler's life.⁶²

While the congregations of both the Protestants and Catholics sought to make sense of the fervent Nationalism that was sweeping the country. Church leadership pondered at length

Reevaluating the Third Reich, New York: Holmes & Meier, 1992). As quoted by, Michael Geyer and John W. Boyer. *Resistance Against the Third Reich: 1933-1990*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, 27-28.

⁵⁹ One such *coup d'etat* was planned by the underground KPD Central Committee. Socialists Julius Leber and Adolf Reichwein were uncovered to be part of this clandestine plot and were picked up in July by the Gestapo via a tip from an inside informer, thus foiling this *coup d'etat* plan.

⁶⁰ Steinberg, 20.

⁶¹ Steinberg, 22.

⁶² For additional reading on early resistance and opposition see, Hans Rothfels. *The German Opposition to Hitler: An Appraisal*, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1962.

how best they could salvage their churches rights and standing within the new Nazi state. Even though three thousand Protestant ministers joined the German Christian Faith Movement and three thousand others formed the protesting Confessional Church, the rest of Germany's seventeen thousand pastors stood in the silent middle.⁶³ Working with this logic, one can easily see that while the Churches received partial support for their own idealized social policies there were certainly going to be sacrifices required of the Churches to accommodate Hitler. As Hitler's status and power increased, greater affronts to religious morality would occur.

Theologians struggled with lagging parishioner attendance and infighting over doctrine and then ultimately and climactically over issues of church versus state and the prestige of being designated the Reich church. Herr Frick, Reich Minister of the Interior, wrote to Hitler after his first talks with evangelical leaders, "My Führer, the bishops have a powerful weapon in their hands: every case against them will be lost."⁶⁴ Also, Sidney B. Fay, a church analyst retorted, "This religious movement to preserve the church from interference by the State marks the first serious check which Hitler has received."⁶⁵

Despite the purported opposition National Socialists assumed, initial confrontations were more about loss of religious rights and freedoms than an outright rejection of Nazism.⁶⁶ Many clergymen who came to oppose Nazism had been early supporters of it. They heralded the revival in German nationalism and were upbeat about the unrivaled potential Nazism offered. However, with changing conditions, early support of Nazism by some gave way to opposition

⁶³ Friedmann, *The Other Victims*, 33.

⁶⁴ Gerhard Ritter. *The German Resistance*, translated by R.T. Clark. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958, 50.

⁶⁵ Sidney B. Fay. "German Church Affairs," in *Current History*, XLIII, (January 1936) 436-437.

⁶⁶ A wonderful essay that addresses this is; Werner G. Jeanrond. "From Resistance to Liberation Theology: German Theologians and the Non/Resistance to the National Socialist Regime," in Michael Geyer and John W. Boyer. *Resistance Against the Third Reich: 1933-1990*, Chicago: The university of Chicago Press, 1992, 295-311.

and distrust of what Hitler and others proposed. Religious figures were not alone in their cautious warnings of Nazism. Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann's recent study of diaspora Catholics in Hanover has said, "according to my sources, a thesis of a consistent and enduring resistant Catholic milieu in the face of National Socialism could not be supported," but later Spicer writes, Schiechen-Ackermann notes that there were many individual practicing Catholics who exhibited "significant forms of refusal and political opposition."⁶⁷

The Nazi State began to regulate everything church-related; literature, newsletters, and church pamphlets, including other forms of religious news were censored by the Nazis in 1933; as a means to purposely suppress communication among church leaders and to regulate news and information church-goers received. Censorship by the State hoped to nullify any overt tactics by dissenters within the clergy, and was an attempt to curb the ongoing confrontation among the Protestant church groups. Organized opposition to Nazism seemed virtually impossible to many as means of communication fell rapidly under Nazi control.⁶⁸ Transportation and communication combined to be nearly insurmountable physical obstacles preventing opposition initiatives and collaborators from being able to convene, communicate, or share ideas. These losses posed great challenges to the abilities of dissenters and prevented oppositionists from gaining necessary momentum outside of pocket resistance.

There were different degrees of risk within the Confessing Church for continuing in anything that appeared to challenge Nazi policy. To thwart disobedience, the Nazis focused on work the Christian church youth performed, since they saw this as a direct challenge to their won

⁶⁷ Kevin P. Spicer. "Between Nationalism and Resistance: The Path of Father Albert Coppenrath in the Third Reich," in *Christian Responses to the Holocaust*, edited by Donald J. Dietrich. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003, 38-39.

efforts to indoctrinate German youth. It was no coincidence that the weekly meetings of the Hitler Youth were held on Sunday mornings. In many cases, Gestapo regulations “permitting” church youth activities were formulated so that actual compliance was impossible. Not surprisingly, the effect of such requirements was often that the churches had to cancel their youth programs. When church workers did hold youth activities, they did so with the troubling knowledge that they might be putting at risk not only themselves but their young participants as well.⁶⁹

Interestingly, on occasion during church services, or more aptly after a Nazi manifesto had been pronounced, some congregations would launch spontaneously into Martin Luther’s hymn, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*. The tune became a hymn of political defiance and of religious confession at the same time.⁷⁰ Reducing discord was viewed as a means to ensure Nazi directives already underway, and those forthcoming would meet with limited opposition. In spite of these and similar attempts by the State to control churches, James Altus Newell writes two noteworthy organizations emerged to fight for a free church; the Young Reformation Movement and the Pastor’s Emergency League. These groups were the first successful attempts to circumvent the State and unify religious opposition. Newell contends these leagues would essentially lead to the founding of the Confessional Synod at Barmen in 1934.⁷¹

Besides the pulpit, another source of early opposition to Hitler was the theological schools in German Universities. Almost at once Hitler took steps to interfere with theological

⁶⁸ For additional reading on religious censorship see, Peter Matheson. *The Third Reich and the Christian Churches*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1981, 57.

⁶⁹ Victoria Barnett. *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest Against Hitler*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, 78-79.

⁷⁰ Han Rothfels. *The German Resistance to Hitler*, Hinsdale: Henry Regnery Company, 1948, 45.

⁷¹ Newell, 53.

training. The decree was later to be issued that no student associated with Evangelical movements could be allowed to enter a university.⁷² To circumvent this, Karl Barth, who was one of the first to voice distrust and opposition to Hitler, emigrated to Switzerland where he taught theology at the University of Basel to many German students who came there specifically to learn from Barth, and who wished to continue their interrupted theological studies. When further restrictions were placed on university attendance in 1937, which effectively excluded students opposing Hitler, many more young men came to Basel.⁷³

In January 1934, when the Nazi sterilization measures went into effect, Catholic priests throughout Germany reminded their congregations of *casti connubii*⁷⁴ in one of two formulations, the first of which was more unequivocal.

1. It is not permitted to request sterilization for oneself or to submit others to sterilization. This is a Catholic teaching.
2. According to the declaration of our Holy Father, a Catholic may not morally request sterilization for himself or order the sterilization for others.

Examples of ordinary citizens who became wary of Hitler's incitements of hatred are clear. One such outspoken opponent of Nazism and anti-Semitism was Frau Irene Harand. Harand, a devout Catholic was an early critic of Nazism's potential, and strongly rejected Catholics who advocated raw triumphalism and undermined⁷⁵ for groundless and false racial,

⁷² Stephen H. Roberts. *The House that Hitler Built*, New York: Harper and Bros., 1938, 278.

⁷³ For additional reading about theological faculties in Universities see, Peter Matheson. *The Third Reich and the Christian Churches*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, Ltd., 1981, 80.

⁷⁴ Casti Connubii was a papal encyclical promulgated by Pope Pius XI in 1930. It stressed the sanctity of marriage, prohibited Roman Catholics from using any form of artificial birth control, and reaffirmed the prohibition on abortion. It also explained the authority of Church doctrine on moral matters, and advocated the cooperation of civil governments with the Church.

⁷⁵ *Nächstenliebe* can be understood as, "the next love" which is a central term of the Jewish and Christian ethics and the substantial demand, which set up Jesus in its lectures. The love for God and for the next one are considered as of equal standing demands.

economic, and national chauvinistic concerns.⁷⁶ She was a prolific writer who spoke out many times with warnings against German racism.

The swastika for Harand constituted a pagan religion with its own pope, apostles, rituals, pilgrimages, and “holy scriptures.” Its leader was an idol adored by his cult, for whom his word was absolute law. It stood for barbarism and decline against culture and progress; for violence, injustice, robbery, and bloodshed against love.⁷⁷ In 1935, Harand sent Archbishop of Vienna, Theodor Innitzer, a copy of her text *Sein Kampf*. In a handwritten note he thanked her, and said the text’s last paragraph – “The swastika constitutes a great danger for mankind. It is the greatest danger of the twentieth century. If we wish to deal with it, we must use those weapons which are strange to it: Idealism and the courage to sacrifice, reason and love, truth and *Gerechtigkeit*”⁷⁸ should be a rallying cry for all non-Nazis. Ironically, in 1938 Innitzer would declare his support for the *Anschluss* (annexation of Austria).⁷⁹

Harand and her husband were in London during the *Anschluss*; in June 1938 they emigrated to New York via Canada. Gershon Greenberg writes that although Harand’s viewpoints were bold and appreciated, her Catholic morality evoked little support from the major Catholic figures of her day. Her Catholic principles did not take root among the Catholic leadership, which may be partially attributable to the fact that the Catholic leadership believed solidarity with the state would eventually ensure much-desired religious protections.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Gershon Greenberg. “Irene Harand’s Campaign Against Nazi Anti-Semitism in Vienna, 1933-1938,” in *Christian Responses to the Holocaust* edited by Donald J. Dietrich. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003, 137.

⁷⁷ Greenberg, 135.

⁷⁸ Term means and implies, justice (Latin *Justitia*) is the derived noun of fairly, its original meaning “*appropriate, correct*”.

⁷⁹ Greenberg, 143.

⁸⁰ Recognized in 1947 for her efforts by the leading Orthodox historian of the Holocaust, Moshe Prager wrote that Harand was the only one intelligent enough to reveal the essence of the Nazi revolt. In 1968 she was honored for her dedication and perseverance in supporting German Jews.

In contrast to Greenberg who laments that there was no middle ground for Roman Catholics who had moral dilemmas about the unfolding crises, or at least not much of one, Schiechen-Ackermann's conclusion does offer a middle ground between those who offer an overly apologetic defense of the institutional church and those who condemn it for not doing enough. Spicer's analysis of Father Albert Coppenrath of Berlin, who used the pulpit to engage in subversive discourse, provides a glimpse of the dogged persistence Coppenrath mustered in his moral crusade against the growing political and injustice he was subject.

The chaotic political and economic conditions of the Weimar years set the tone for the hopes of a dynamic leadership which could revive and restore the glory and honor of Germany's past. But, as would be seen by 1935, German elites found the increasing restrictions upon their prerogatives, and harassment and circumvention of their authority, unacceptable. Their general agreement with many of Hitler's early political objectives, however, made their ability to resist these encroachments later, when they were no longer acceptable, much more difficult. Outwardly, Hitler promised to protect religion, as evidenced by his signed an agreement with the Catholic Pontificate. The Concordat⁸¹ promised freedom of religion and granted Catholic officials the right to operate their churches as they had been doing. And in the translated portions of Article 33 of the Concordat provided by Peter Matheson,⁸²

...Should differences of opinion arise in future as to the interpretation or application of any of the terms of the concordat the Holy See and the German Reich will consult together to resolve the matter in a friendly manner.

⁸¹ In general, a concordat means an agreement, or union of wills, on some matter. Agreement of wills may be had in many ways: in friendship, in regard to privileges, in a bilateral contract, etc. A concordat is a law, ecclesiastical and civil, made for a certain country in regard to matters which in some way concern both Church and State, a law, moreover, possessing the force of a treaty entered into by both the ecclesiastical and civil power and to a certain extent binding upon both.

⁸² Peter Matheson. *The Third Reich and the Christian Churches*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, Ltd., 1981, 33.

But all too soon, the Nazis abolished the Catholic Youth League, and by 1936 all Catholic children had to join the Hitler Youth. It seems evident from letters written by Cardinal Adolf Bertram to Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, State Secretary to the Vatican, that the German hierarchy clung to the view that speedy ratification of the concordat was the only way to secure an effective legal basis by which they could make official protests on violations or unfavorable conditions which began to arise.

As Matheson demonstrates, the Catholic Church was already particularly dismayed by assaults to the Catholic Youth Associations.⁸³ Specifically addressing these assaults upon the Catholic Youth Associations and other Catholic organizations, Bertram summarized his concerns in the letter which he sent to Pacelli,

On all sides Catholic associations are publicly slandered, being accused of political unreliability, of lack of patriotism, of enmity against the state. They are denounced for hindering the unitary drive of the totalitarian state by involving the German people in confessional rivalries. For this reason, it is said, they have no place in the new Reich....All associations whose individual members previously tended to belong to the Center Party are suspect, and doubt is cast upon their loyalty to the new Reich...

It was also during this year that the Nazis ordered the removal of all crucifixes from the Catholic Church schools in Bavaria. People who tried to replace the crosses were arrested. This led to a great public outcry and it was only then, after German women took to protesting loudly in the streets, that Hitler withdrew the order and allowed the crucifixes to be replaced in the schools.⁸⁴ Through the removal of the crucifixes, Hitler and his cohorts attempted to disrupt the

⁸³ Matheson, 34.

⁸⁴ Friedmann, *The Other Victims*, 32. See also, Guenter Lewy. *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany*, New York: McGraw-Hill book Company, 1964, 313-314, and William Sheridan Allen. "Objective and Subjective

authority of the churches, but the Nazi plans were thwarted by vocal protest.

Nazi officials ridiculed Catholic scruples, noting that popes had for centuries tolerated the castration of choir boys. Catholics responded that such practices had stopped in the early nineteenth century. Recriminations continued. Nazi officials yielded on only one point. Catholic physicians who objected to sterilization (or abortion) were exempted from performing the operation unless they served on public health boards.⁸⁵ Sadly, the moral weight of contributing to the sterilization of unwilling Germans often affected those with the least power or ability to circumvent the situation; women.⁸⁶ Koonz maintains that the Nazi eugenics policies earned widespread disaffection. She suggests particular issues were met with dampened enthusiasm, and one can conclude as Ian Kershaw has, that Germans accepted Hitler as a leader without subscribing specifically to his Nazi ideology. But, she asserts, single-issue opposition does not in itself assume broader dissent. Nor did the specific criticisms necessarily incite more profound criticism.⁸⁷

Regrettably, the Pope issued only one public objection to the Nazis' racial policies. This document, *With Burning Sorrow* condemned the Nazis for not honoring the Concordat; the Pope failed to mention the persecution of German citizens at the hands of the Nazis.⁸⁸ While the

Inhabitants in the German Resistance to Hitler," in *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust*, edited by Franklin H. Littell and Hubert G. Locke. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974, 121, 114-123.

⁸⁵ Koonz in Geyer and Boyer, 28.

⁸⁶ Koonz pursues the implications related to Catholic women as mothers, nurses, educators, and social workers. The exemption of physicians in their involvement in sterilization and abortion merely passed these difficult moral responsibilities upon the next echelons.

⁸⁷ Koonz, in Geyer and Boyer, 37-38.

⁸⁸ In two articles author Susan Zuccotti suggests little evidence supports the notion that Pius XII delivered a directive to members of the Catholic Church to help Jews during the German occupation of Italy, and also maintains the *L'Osservatore Romano* failed to do all it could either in exposing the plight of Jews being persecuted by the German Reich. For additional reading on these articles see, Susan Zuccotti. "Pope Pius XII and the Rescue of Jews in Italy: Evidence of a Papal Directive? *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Volume 18, Number 2 (2004) 255, 255-

majority of Germany's Catholic priests remained silent to the conditions that were unfolding around them, some spoke out against the persecution of the Jews. Cardinal Faulhaber's home was set afire by the Nazis, cries of "take him to Dachau" reverberated along the street as mobs threw rocks into his windows.⁸⁹

Thomas Newell writes that a good indication of the growing strength of the Confessing Church is that from 1935 – 1937, the masses still flocked to churches known to be pastored by Confessing clergymen. The German people overflowed these churches in spite of increased Nazi persecution towards the outspoken Confessing church pastors, and these pastors' wariness towards Nazism. This author questions if what was actually occurring was an indication of growing strength of like-minded resistance or opposition, or of dogged persistence to not back down to Nazi pressure to regulate and govern the churches. To infer that the Confessing church realized a growth in ideal and support against the political entity of Nazism could be considered highly enthusiastic under the given circumstances.

Interestingly, author Victoria Barnett discovered that even in heavily Nazi regions Confessing pastors found groups of Christians who remained loyal, despite persecution by Nazi officials. In Thuringia for instance, a stronghold of the "German Christian," Nazis had been part of the regional government coalition since 1930. Only a handful of Confessing Christians existed, yet they continued to gather for Sunday worship, meeting in homes instead of churches for their Bible studies.⁹⁰

There is abundant evidence to suggest church congregations felt and openly demonstrated

273 and Susan Zuccotti. "L'Osservatore Romano and the Holocaust, 1939-1945," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Volume 17, Number 2 (2003) 249, 249-277.

⁸⁹ Friedmann, *The Other Victims*, 32.

⁹⁰ Barnett, 82.

their sympathy towards their clerical leadership regardless of the consequences. Through ongoing, regular church attendance, or through the overt gestures as the case of Pastor Coppenrath, whose membership went to great lengths to pay his assessed fines issued by the Nazis, church membership was at times in direct defiance of Nazi policy. But, while members of the congregation were in a sense disobeying Nazi wishes by having anything at all to do with the Confessing Church, The Confessing Church was not doing all it could to staunch Nazi actions of hate and persecution by actively opposing the state. The Catholic Church was no better in its outward stance towards Nazism. The Concordat was for the Catholics a benign, but worthless defense against the challenges that would be forthcoming.

Part II Late Period – Post- 1937

First they came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Socialists and the Trade Unionists, but I was neither, so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Jews, but I was not a Jew so I did not speak out. And when they came for me, there was no one left to speak out for me. – Martin Niemöller

While Karl Barth was expelled from Germany in 1937, Niemöller's urgings to oppose National Socialism caused him to be arrested and banished to a concentration camp for the duration of the war.⁹¹ As Protestants argued over Christian doctrine which would lead to the Confessing Church break-away faction, the German Catholic Church also underwent a period of discontent. In 1938, a Catholic anti-Nazi group calling itself the *Bayernwacht* (Bavarian Watch) began holding secret meetings at the home of one of its leaders. Their goal was nothing less than to reverse the verdict of 1866: to create a new Catholic state combining southern and western Germany with Austria, minus Prussia and the Protestant north.⁹²

It wasn't without lack of trying. On June 27, 1937, Martin Niemöller preached his last sermon to an overflowing congregation. He spoke frankly to those gathered:

We have no more thought of using our own powers to escape the arm of the authorities that had the Apostles of old. No more are we ready to keep silent at man's behest when God commands us to speak. For it is, and must remain, the case that we must obey God rather than men.

On July 1, 1937, the Gestapo came to Niemöller's home and escorted him to jail. He was shuttled in and out of different prisons and camps, and when he was found in court to have served more than the time he would be charged and was set to be released for "time-served,"

⁹¹ Recommended reading, Wolfgang Gerlach. *And the Witnesses were Silent: The Confessing Church and the Persecution of the Jews*. Translated and edited by, Victoria J. Barnett. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000.

Hitler made Niemöller his “personal prisoner,” and as previously mentioned, Niemöller spent the duration of the war in concentration camps.⁹³ Unlike Niemöller, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was not allowed to survive the Third Reich. There was “no permissible circumstance” on the part of the State by orders of Hitler, for Bonhoeffer to outlive the Third Reich, and he was summarily executed on April 9, 1945. Bonhoeffer had been imprisoned since April 1943, after the Gestapo was alerted to the breach within the German military, i.e., the *Abwehr*⁹⁴ resistance group led by General Hans Oster; of which Bonhoeffer was intimately associated.⁹⁵

In an attempt to quell the vocal priests, nuns, and pastors who pleaded with their flocks to withstand the Nazi lures, the Third Reich systematically arrested and detained as many religious opponents as possible. By 1940 Pastor Christian Reger had been arrested four times. Sometimes wondering how he, a small-town pastor could stand up against Hitler, he soon realized if he was going to be a true a soldier of Christ he would have to fight against the Nazis. Condemned as a political prisoner, Reger was assigned to Barracks 26 at Dachau.

Upon entering the “special” Pastors’ Barracks, Reger first learned of the many other pastors and priests who were being held as “political prisoners.” Werner Sylten was there because he had a Jewish grandmother; Father Fritz Seitz was there for hearing the confession of a Pole. Hitler had declared Poles subhuman, and clergy were not allowed to give them any rites of the church. There were other Catholic priests and Greek Orthodox ministers in the special barracks. “Hatred knows no discrimination, we come from many countries,” commented Fritz

⁹² Large, 297.

⁹³ Newell, 84.

⁹⁴ The *Abwehr* was a German intelligence organization which functioned from 1921 to 1944. The word *Abwehr* is German for defense. After February 4, 1938, its name in title was Overseas Department/Office in Defense of the Armed Forces High Command (“Amt Ausland/Abwehr im Oberkommando der Wehrmacht.”).

Seitz.⁹⁶ In a letter from his wife Reger was informed that his congregation had dwindled to only a few members, his wife saying, “I cannot condemn them for being afraid for their lives.”

Despite the overwhelming pressure to abandon him, Reger’s wife Mina and a few hold-outs of his congregation refused to desert him and somehow withstood the Gestapo’s tactics. Reger remembers that day-by-day his fellow ministers gave him instructions in the art of survival.

“Above all, one must have luck; luck not to be chosen for the hangings, luck not to get sick.”

Surprisingly in 1941, a small radio which was positively forbidden was somehow smuggled into the barracks recalls Reger. The radio remained well-hidden and was never detected by the guards. One morning in December 1941, Leonard Steinwender began to shout, “Hallelujah, hallelujah, praise the Lord! The Americans have entered the war. It will soon be over.”⁹⁷ Christmas Eve 1942 arrived but sadly, freedom still eluded the camp, “we knelt and prayed for deliverance,” remembers Reger. “The loneliness of the previous year overwhelmed me,” and began to cry. “I prayed, oh how I prayed that evil would be no more.” “I even prayed for our Lord to forgive our oppressors. As I stood up, I felt a great peace. I was a man of God. I would not let my oppressors make me hate.”⁹⁸

Two factors need to be emphasized about opposition on the part of the Evangelical Church according to Frank P. Chambers. “First, never more than half the pastors and fewer of the laymen were willing to offer open opposition to Hitler.”⁹⁹ Chambers remains pessimistic of the significance of church opposition saying,

⁹⁵ For additional reading about Hans Oster see, *The Oster Conspiracy of 1938: The Unknown Story of the Military Plot to Kill Hitler and Avert World War II*, New York: Harper Collins, 2003.

⁹⁶ Friedmann, *The Other Victims*, 39.

⁹⁷ Friedmann, *The Other Victims*, 41-42.

⁹⁸ Friedmann, *The Other Victims*, 43.

One year sufficed for Hitler to accomplish his revolution and transform the fate of Germany. The churches alone offered some resistance, mainly through the courageous action of individuals, a resistance which therefore ill-concerted and was of a declining effectiveness.

According to one woman in Baden there were “sheep in wool’s clothing.” The young female theologian, who had been interrogated several times by the Gestapo, remembered running into a church social worker who said to her, “I hear you’re not doing well.” Someone had told him what I had gone through under the political authorities. “Ha!” he said, “You should have done as I did. You see?” He flashed a big party badge. That someone can do that she remarks, say, “On the outside, I do this, and inside, naturally, I’m completely different” – I was never able to do that. There *were* people though who could do that though. I don’t hold that for entirely genuine. But I have to admit, some people in our church administration did it too. It wasn’t my way, but I have to accept it.¹⁰⁰

The evidence discussed in Susanne Brown-Fleming’s essay begins to suggest the phobias which existed at the time regarding “Jewishness.” The inability of various members of the Protestant and Catholic Church leadership to recognize their own anti-Semitic tendencies, exposes their unapologetic behavior towards the combined failure of Christianity to be a beacon of resistance to Nazi religious persecution.¹⁰¹

Brown-Fleming writes, “Numerous scholars have detailed the adverse effect that

⁹⁹ Frank P. Chambers. *This Age of Conflict: The Western World, 1914 to Present*, New York: Harcourt Brace, Inc. 1962, 361.

¹⁰⁰ Barnett, 98-99.

¹⁰¹ German Catholic Bishops on January 23, 1995 squarely blamed the Church itself and not merely its individual members for its behavior during the Holocaust (Shoah). They pointed to the anti-Jewish attitudes in German Catholicism as one of the main reasons why “during the years of the Third Reich Christians did not offer resistance to racial anti-Semitism.” Robert S. Wistrich. “The Vatican and the Shoah,” *Modern Judaism*, Volume 21, Number 2 (2001) 85-86, 83-107.

American immigration policy had upon Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors seeking shelter and new lives in the United States between 1933 and the early to mid-1950s.” She cites Joseph W. Bendersky who has traced nativist and Darwinian tendencies as manifested in the Judeophobia that existed in the U.S. Army officer corps, and who also contends other patterns of anti-Jewish bias which existed among U.S. Roman Catholics has not received as much attention as it warrants.¹⁰² Immigration restrictions had a profound effect on possible avenues of escape as conditions within Germany eroded for dissenters, Jews, and others wishing to flee.

If the German Bishops had wanted to sanction active resistance to Hitler, there were thus many precedents for such a stand.¹⁰³ The fact that they consistently opposed such resistance will therefore have to be explained on grounds other than the inhibiting effects of Christian theology. In the first years of Hitler’s reign the bishops probably had hopes that the Nazi state would relinquish its anti-Catholic policies if the Catholics only showed sufficient willingness to cooperate and support the Third Reich. Later, when this hope was disappointed, the episcopate had committed the Church to a course of loyal obedience which it would be very difficult to reverse.¹⁰⁴

As has been demonstrated, various attempts to circumvent the “enemy” were discussed and implemented within the churches. When active or passive opposition produced limited results, collaborating with the Nazis for the purpose of seeming assimilation and anonymity regardless whether this action was in appearance only, did occur. In other personal cases

¹⁰² Suzanne Brown-Fleming. “The Worst Enemies of a Better Germany”: Postwar Antisemitism among Catholic Clergy and U.S. Occupation Forces,” in *Journal of Holocaust Studies*, Volume 18, Number 3 (Winter 2004) 379-401, 379.

¹⁰³ For example, the blessing of the Mexican revolt *Cristeros* in 1927, and Pope Pius XI’s blessing to the rebellion led by General Franco of Spain.

¹⁰⁴ Guenter Lewy. *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964, 312.

throughout the Third Reich, average citizens allowed themselves to be considered “for” the regime, while internally they secretly hoped it would fall.

I contend through the supporting evidence that both the Protestant and Catholic Churches failed to act against Nazism because of limitations or restrictions they felt would jeopardize their own special interests. Whether the Churches tried to safeguard youth educational programs or restrict unnecessary clerical involvement with eugenics policies, opposition was not directed towards countering the increased persecution and loss of personal rights and freedoms that were beginning to affect some segments of society. It was in all ways an act to defend and safeguard the Churches within the framework of the German State.

The enlightened humanism demonstrated by Barth, Niemöller, and Bonhoeffer and the persistent confrontations with Nazi doctrine as evidenced by Coppenrath could not staunch the tide of Nazi hatred and inhumanity solely on their own accord. A universal and wide-spread challenge to Nazi ideology was required at the early stages of the Nazi era to possibly thwart it from latching on and gaining ground. A unified refusal by German citizens to tolerate the systematic exclusion of radicals, Jews, political opponents, and other undesirables from society was sporadic or at times seemingly impalpable. Organized religion was negligent in providing a leadership example. Courageous Germans were forced to take their own initiative to do something to thwart Nazism, compelled by commitment to moral and ethical integrity which the Churches lacked consistently.

To those who are not theological inclined, it might seem surprising to learn the post- Nazi outcome of Gerhard Kittel. Kittel’s early support of National Socialism, who leant his Christian theology and reputation in support of the Nazi Research Section which was formed to deal with the “Jewish Question” is renowned today as one of the twentieth century’s greatest scholars and

theologians. Christian pastors and theologians throughout the world continue to use his *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* and his other reference works despite Kittel's imprisonment for being a Nazi. Kittel died shortly after his release from prison in 1947, after serving seventeen months.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESISTANCE TO RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL PERSECUTION

Part I Early Period – Pre- 1937

National Socialism is a form of conversion....
Once we hold power Christianity will be overcome...
and a new Germany without
the Pope and the Bible will be established – Adolf Hitler

Regardless whether her analogy was created with the benefit of post World War II hindsight, the deceit and illusion to which Victoria Barnett refers in the following quote is prophetic; its portrayal of daily life in Nazi Germany is altogether accurate in its chilling clarity. Barnett writes,¹⁰⁵

Even in totalitarian societies the rhythms of daily existence continue. But the structure of a dictatorship is like a spider's web, its strands interwoven and extending into the farthest corners of society. For those who become caught, the perception and practice of daily routines is abruptly altered. Others evade the web, however, and are able to maintain the illusion that life goes on as before.

This chapter and the next examine various coordinated and singular reactions to Nazism which demonstrate initial skepticism to outright refusal to accept the Nazis. In keeping with the previous two chapters the material is being presented in early and late periods to demonstrate how the mood towards Hitler was initially and then over time. Initial harsh reactions could and were more easily tolerated as the example of Ernst Niekisch, but after 1937 there was no acceptable recourse to exclaim distaste or condemnation of Hitler and the Nazis except to do so clandestinely.

In 1926, Ernst Niekisch had founded the Journal for Socialist and National-Revolutionary Policy, entitled *Der Widerstand*; he campaigned against reparations, characterizing them as blackmail by the capitalist powers; he called for world revolution against world capitalism. By 1932, Niekisch focused his ire upon Hitler, calling him a German disaster, and continued to campaign against the regime through 1933 in his *Der Widerstand*.¹⁰⁶ It seems to have taken four years, from 1934 to 1938, before the true conscientious opponents of Nazism had emerged from the ranks of the fellow-travelers, the indifferent and the undecided.

To maintain a purely negative attitude all the time to what the Nazis and Hitler were proposing and implementing must have been extraordinarily difficult for those people who rejected the Nazi platform. The occasional temptation to say or do something in opposition to the unacceptable conditions and policies must have been overwhelming. Author Michael Balfour who was intimately associated with members of the Kreisau Circle writes of anti-Nazis. He comments that one such opportunity to publicly show dissatisfaction was to attend the funerals of people known to have been against the regime. For example, Balfour mentions the funeral of Communist leader Karl Hoffman, who was buried in Essen in October 1934. He writes, “1500 people turned up although neither the time nor the place of the burial had been announced; many carried wreaths of red roses.” Another way Balfour mentions for people to do something small to show opposition was to omit references to Hitler in obituary announcements, particularly of war casualties. And still another form of defiance was expressed in Schiller’s play *Don Carlos*. The line, “give us back our freedom of thought” generated such thunderous

¹⁰⁵ Barnett, 74.

¹⁰⁶ Peter Hoffman. *The History of the German Resistance 1933-1945*, Third English Edition, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996, 19.

applause that Hitler insisted the play be removed from the repertory.¹⁰⁷

On 1 April 1933 Propaganda Minister Goebbels ordered a boycott of Jewish stores, cafés, restaurants, banks, and services. In cities and towns across the Reich, SA men painted “Jude” and “Germans Don’t Shop Here!” on the windows of Jewish shops. In Munich, as in some other towns, the Anti-Jewish boycott was not as successful as the Nazis had hoped. While some patrons studiously avoided the targeted stores and services, many others did not. However, most of those who resisted the boycott probably did so not out of solidarity with the Jews. Rather, their behavior seems to have reflected a disinclination to let Berlin dictate shopping habits. If Jewish shops offered the best values, and often they did, many Münchners would ignore official edicts and perhaps even their own anti-Semitic inclinations to patronize them.¹⁰⁸

In one example of the Jewish boycott recalled by Emmi Bonhoeffer to author Dorothee von Meding, Bonhoeffer says,

My brother-in-law was highly enthusiastic about Hitler, which strongly influenced my sister. A few weeks after the boycott started, a local Jewish merchant called to deliver the linen my mother had ordered. My sister rushed down the stairs and said: “Mama, I see you are still buying from Jews. I’m afraid I must tell you to choose – either the Jews or your daughter.” To which my mother replied in her soft but firm voice: “My child, I choose the Jews.”

By mid-1934 the Nazis had seemingly killed, imprisoned, exiled, or intimidated all those who were tempted to practice active opposition, along with a few others who had never harbored such intentions at all. While most ordinary Münchners seem to have enjoyed the Nazi festivals and notoriety of being the, “Capital of the Movement,” a sizable number of citizens continued to

¹⁰⁷ Michael Balfour. *Withstanding Hitler: In Germany 1933-45*, London: Routledge, 1988, 63.

¹⁰⁸ Large, 248.

find fault with the new order. But as complaints grew in volume, they rarely translated into sustained or fundamental opposition to the regime. In the end, as a matter of fact, Munich's carnivalesque culture may have had a bread-and-circus effect on the local population, helping to drown dissent in diversion.¹⁰⁹

In response to a question regarding life during the Third Reich, Frau Margarete Fischer replied, "The mood, the spirit of the times was certainly *positive*. In the thirties, things went uphill."¹¹⁰ The order, and there was work. They didn't have these horrible lines of unemployed anymore." But she elaborated further,

Many who nowadays always say, 'Yes, we were a hundred percent against it' – all of that one can say very easily afterward. Most human beings tried at the very least, even with they didn't agree one hundred percent with the Third Reich, or with National Socialism, to adapt themselves.

In retrospect, Frau Fischer recalls the disillusionment in the discoveries of what lay beneath the surface of National Socialism once the war was over and the trials began. She comments, "This idealism we all had, when you get right down to it, was misused scandalously. That it led to war, the complete reverse of what we wrote on our banners, "For world peace..."

Hiltigunt Zassenhaus brings forth her inner-most personal thoughts and recalls the depression and feelings of frustration she experienced as a young woman during the Nazi years. "My frustration was growing. Why could I not be like everybody else?" "What had made me different from my neighbors?" she asked herself at the time. "They seemed so happy and content with their pictures of Hitler in their living rooms." "Why could I not accept what I was unable to change?" "After all, what had I to fear for myself?" "I was not Jewish; as of yet the

¹⁰⁹ Large, 269.

bell of our door had been spared by the Gestapo and it did not seem to matter that none of us had joined the Party.”

Due to the political astuteness of her mother, Fraü Martha Brixius reports she received enlightenment about what was in store for Germans if National Socialism gained power. Thanks in part to both her parents, Fraü Brixius had the clear conscience not to have been a Nazi. But she does not refer to herself as an active “anti-Nazi” either. In preparation for her interview with author Alison Owings, Fraü Brixius thought it mandatory that she clarify this position by stating to Owings that to her, an active anti-Nazi would imply someone who had hidden a Jew or done something along those lines, and she had not.¹¹¹

Undeterred, Owings’ dialogue with Fraü Brixius provided an interesting revelation which harkens back to the previous assertions posited by Kaplan and Koonz. It is easy to judge heroes or criminals or even fellow travelers by their responses to the Third Reich, says Owings, but it is not easy to judge a person who represents what might be called a universal dilemma of degree – a person who opposed the Third Reich more with heart and brain than with life and limb, a person who chose not to go along rather than to go against, a person who was, in sum, a passive anti-Nazi. As was well-known to Germans at the time, this sort of non-committal German posed the greatest threat to successful authority as the persistent Nazi propaganda made evident. The refusal to actively surrender to and support Nazism was considered treasonous.

Citing the research of A. Barkai, Martyn Housden writes that as early as spring 1933, Jewish doctors and artists began to organize themselves. They coordinated their efforts in an umbrella organization called the Reich Association of German Jews. Their mission was to unify

¹¹⁰ Owings, 8-9.

Jews in an effort to protect the lives and future of Jews within Germany. Through the creation of new educational centers and fostering support for schools already in existence, the Reich Association of German Jews sought to demonstrate they could serve as a vital part of German society by demonstrating Jewish worth. Some analysts discredit the Reich Association as effectual resistance to Nazism by suggesting that instead of being concerned with trying to give life under Nazi rule some content and meaning, serious efforts should have been undertaken to direct as many Jews as possible out of Germany.¹¹²

With the overwhelming loss of rights and privileges of Jews which escalated within months of Hitler ascending to the Chancellorship, when the persecution first began, the initial response of Jews reflected their degree of integration into German society.¹¹³ Representing the unassimilated Jews, the Organization of Independent Orthodox Communities wrote to Hitler personally as early as October 1933 requesting and pleading for determination on what their futures were to hold in the government.¹¹⁴ Letters to the Reich authorities hoping to influence the government were written in protest of growing discrimination; demands were unheeded.

Housden writes that in-keeping with middle-class notions of respectability and responsibility, Germany's well-established Jewish population also began looking to legal institutions for protection. A remarkable success in this connection was won not through the German legal process, but through the League of Nations. As an accident of the post-First World

¹¹¹ Alison Owings. *Frauen: German Women Recall the Third Reich*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993, 198.

¹¹² Housden, 124. See, H. Winterfelt as quoted by A. Barkai, in *From Boycott to Annihilation: The Economic Struggle of German Jews 1933-1945*. London: University Press of New England, 1989, 141.

¹¹³ For additional reading on the loss of rights of German citizens, both Jew and Gentile see, Martha Dodd. *Through Embassy Eyes*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1939; and Hiltigunt Zassenhaus. *Walls: Resisting the Third Reich - One Woman's Story*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1974.

¹¹⁴ Housden, 120.

War peace settlement, the Geneva Convention of 15 May 1922, which stipulated that national minorities be treated fairly, was in force in Upper Silesia during the early years of the Third Reich. Nor did success end there contends Housden, as a result of continuing discrimination, in September 1933 the Association of Synagogues in the Province of Upper Silesia informed the German Foreign Office of its intention to send more petitions to the League of Nations.¹¹⁵ Until 1937 when the League of Nations supervision expired, Jews of Upper Silesia were spared some of the discrimination going on elsewhere within the Reich.

Housden has provided a necessary reminder of the “respectable social sensibilities” and “gendered sensibilities” of which Marian Kaplan has also previously written. Interestingly, the women of the *Widerstand* created a counter-culture to fascism, a completely different “order” for their husbands and their children. The tolerance and enlightened ideas that they practiced in their families created a kind of bulwark against the destructive and all pervasive power mechanisms of a totalitarian society.¹¹⁶ Von Meding does make a distinction between the involvement of the “women of the 20th July Plot” and other women who participated in resistance efforts. She says the first group of women acted politically within their own sphere and thus found their own special form of resistance.

In this respect, these women stand apart from the political resistance of for instance, the women who belonged to the *Rote Kapelle* (Red Orchestra)¹¹⁷ and who integrated themselves into the active resistance of their husbands. Author Alison Owings encountered an interviewee

¹¹⁵ Housden, 121-22.

¹¹⁶ von Meding, xvii.

¹¹⁷ The Red Orchestra was a left-wing underground resistance movement in Western Europe cooperating with Moscow and led inside Germany by Harro Schulze-Boysen and Arvid Harnack. The SS Security Service broke their radio cipher in 1942 and, after holding back for several months to uncover the entire network, arrested Schulz-

named Fraü Marianne Karlsruben, who as a young woman had inadvertently met this group through her future husband and narrowly missed being apprehended in a Gestapo surveillance raid of the group's membership.¹¹⁸ In Lucien Steinberg's research of analyzing Jewish resistance within Germany he states,

We know of no other "comprehensive survey" detailing the role played by the Jews in the anti-Nazi left-wing Resistance movements, only a number of individual cases, such as the Felix Jonas affair in which ten or so Berlin militant Social Democrats, working under cover of a popular Berlin choral society called *Arion*, were arrested between May and June 1937, accused of "intending secretly to re-establish the Social Democratic organization *Reichsbanner*. Jonas and two of his accomplices were Jews.

Other religious groups anguished under Hitler's merciless drive to purify Germany. Called a "degenerate race," Jehovah's Witnesses were Christians believing in the bible and the Second Coming of Christ but, their refusal to serve in the German army or navy enraged the ire of the Third Reich who persecuted Jehovah's Witnesses with a vengeance. First listed with other groups as "dangerous" in 1933, Jehovah's Witnesses were banned from gathering or holding meetings, prohibited from distributing newsletters, and were not allowed to sing or pray without penalty of a prison term.

As situations worsened, a constant fear of both parents of a Jehovah Witness family being sent to prison, forced some believers to sign a paper promising not to be Jehovah's Witness just to keep their children from being taken away. Many Jehovah's Witnesses refused to abandon their faith and were taken away to face hard labor, starvation and disease in concentration camps merely for their refusal to submit to Nazi pressure to denounce their religion. By 1939 in

Boysen on 30 August 1942. He was executed 20 December. Some 118 other members were also arrested of whom about 55, including 19 women, were subsequently executed.

¹¹⁸ Owings, 39.

contrast to the yellow star Jews had to wear, Jehovah's Witnesses were forced to don a purple arm band to distinguish them from other Germans. Out of the over 25,000 Jehovah's Witnesses who lived in Germany, 6,019 were imprisoned, many died.¹¹⁹

Ina R. Friedmann has collected many stories of people who were persecuted by the Nazis for their religious beliefs. The details she gathered from the surviving Kusserow family are a heart-wrenching tale of defiance and commitment to one's moral and spiritual beliefs. The Kusserow's were targeted by the Nazis in 1936 when the Gestapo insisted they renounce their faith and disassociate with the International Society of Bible Students, to which the family had been engaged to distribute the *Watchtower* newsletter. When Herr and Fraü Kusserow declined to renounce their Jehovah Witness faith, they were taken immediately to prison.

The Kusserow family underwent unrelenting harassment and personal loss at the hands of the Third Reich. All told, the children as well as the parents endured many years in concentration camps and prison. For many years during the Nazi reign the whereabouts of some of the children was not known, since they had been taken by the Gestapo without warning. Three of the thirteen children were beheaded for their refusal to enlist in the army. No one in the Kusserow family ever renounced their faith despite the severe conditions placed upon them to do so.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Ina R. Friedmann. *The Other Victims: First-Person Stories of Non-Jews Persecuted by the Nazis*, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin company, 1990, 48-9.

¹²⁰ Friedmann, *The Other Victims*, 59.

Part II Late Period – Post-1937

We existed in a particular limbo, torn between fear, suspense, and curiosity.
How else could we have endured life,
if not as students of the world around us? – Ingeborg Hecht

In the administration, in the judiciary, in the teaching profession, in the churches, in factories and offices, in the *Reichswehr*¹²¹, among the educated, among artists and authors, in other words in all conceivable walks of life, the like-minded formed groups and circles; gradually they learned not to disclose their views at once but nevertheless to be recognizable to other opponents of the regime.¹²² Annedore Leber, whose Socialist husband was arrested by the Gestapo in July 1944 due to his involvement in a clandestine Communist plot writes, “Most men will only resist if they feel that an alternative government is at least possible. For the first five years of Nazi rule there could be little more than isolated acts of resistance and these could hardly take the form of more than outspoken criticism.”¹²³

Five years of Nazi regime had taught Germans an attitude they had not known before. They learned to be cautious in all actions. During the first year they witnessed book burnings in bonfires throughout the city. Some discovered there was a definite method to Hitler’s madness; he attacked only one group at a time. First, the members of parties that had previously opposed him were targeted; then, the intellectuals at the universities. Much later he turned against prominent church leaders, and finally the Jews. He attacked each minority group. And with the ingenuity and slyness of the primitive, he apparently sensed human behavior patterns and

¹²¹ The *Reichswehr*, literally “National Defense or Imperial Defense” formed the military organization of Germany from 1919 until 1935, when the government renamed it the Wehrmacht (Defense Force).

¹²² Hoffman, 28.

exploited them. He counted on the apathy of the individual, who would react only if he himself were endangered.¹²⁴

Informing, shadowing, wire tapping laid German mind's bare to the all-seeing eye of the state. People would later use the war-time slogan of the spy-fearing government, "Careful! The enemy is listening!" to warn the incautious against making critical statements publicly, but which also meant to include the children in the household who may at some inopportune moment reveal a family secret or worse, denounce his or her own parents. An honest word or a sympathetic deed might be an act of heroism. A woman from Oberhausen occasionally responded to the "Heil Hitler" with "Why, is he sick?" (*Heil* can mean "heal.") When asked why she dared do this she replied, "I *never* greeted with the 'Heil Hitler' because that was so stupid."¹²⁵ The remark, "I shall live to see the end of Hitler's thousand-year Reich" was enough to send one to trial or straight to concentration camp. And fear of the camp, of torture, of death lay oppressive upon the non-conformer.¹²⁶

Of course, not all Germans abandoned their Jewish friends. In fact, it was often precisely an expression of loyalty – the friend who came by ostentatiously, the former classmate who went out of his or her way to shake hands with a Jewish friend in a crowded store, or the "sympathy purchases" after the April boycott –which gave Jews mixed messages. Unfortunately, some Jews stayed on in Germany because these gestures of goodwill seemed to reinforce the belief

¹²³ Annedore Leber. *Conscience in Revolt: Sixty-Four Stories of Resistance in German 1933-1945*, London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1957, xiii.

¹²⁴ Hiltigunt Zassenhaus. *Walls: Resisting the Third Reich - One Woman's Story*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1974, 22.

¹²⁵ Owings, 27.

¹²⁶ Boehm, xvii

that National Socialism was a temporary anomaly.¹²⁷

Author Cynthia Crane completed a six-year study in Germany whereby she gained first-hand accounts from a number of incredible women who share in common two unique distinctions; children of mixed-marriage, i.e., Jewish-Christians, and survivors of the climatic years subsequent to the Nuremburg Laws of the Third Reich.¹²⁸ Crane reveals her own family history parallels many of the stories she collected in writing her book. Crane's grandfather escaped Nazi Germany in 1938 - his license to practice medicine revoked, because he was labeled a Jew. A religious designation was declared because her grandfather's grandparents had been tied socially to Jewish culture, but, neither her grandfather nor the elder grandparents were themselves practicing Jews.

Similar situations of distant family members having being designated as "Jewish" at one time or another became the justification by which thousands of Germans were segregated from "Aryan" society. In order to make these determinations, a detailed process of record collection on the part of the Nazi's was undertaken. Currently the Brandenburg Evangelical Church in Berlin is the repository of the Nazi era files derived from this collection process. A complete accounting of every German family of mixed religious faith was put in motion after the Nuremburg Laws of 1935.

A reference card file system was implemented to record collected data. On each card was written such information as; parent and grandparent names, religious affiliations, including

¹²⁷ Marion Kaplan. "Jewish Women in Nazi Germany: Daily Life, Daily Struggles, 1933-1939," in *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*, edited by Carol Rittner and John K. Roth. New York: Paragon House, 1993, 193.

¹²⁸ For additional reading on Jewish Christians see, Peter Matheson. *The Third Reich and the Christian Churches*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, Ltd., 1981, 82.

baptismal dates for the person the card was documenting, and other pertinent information. This information was commonly on file already at the local church where each person's baptismal record was kept. The information recorded on the cards was obtained from church pastors and church registrars throughout Germany who were ordered by Nazi directive to supply names.

Yad Vashem, located in Jerusalem is a Jewish people's memorial of the Holocaust and symbolizes an ongoing confrontation with the rupture engendered by the Holocaust. Containing one of the world's largest repositories of information on the Holocaust, Yad Vashem is a leader in *Shoah* education, commemoration, research and documentation. The following *Mischlinge* definitions are provided via their education center to clarify the Third Reich's determination and classification it used to racially stereotype thousands of Germans.¹²⁹

The racial Nuremberg Laws of September 1935 did not actually define who was legally to be considered a Jew. Thus, an additional decree was made in November 1935 which provided detailed definitions of Jew, Aryan, and *Mischlinge*. Jews were defined as people with at least three full Jewish grandparents. A *Geltungsjud*e was a self-described or believing Jew, this included converts to Judaism from Christianity. *Mischlinge* were divided into those of first and second degree; *Mischlinge ersten grades* and *Mischlinge zweiten grades*. Considered half-Jew, the first degree designation was a person with two Jewish grandparents who did not belong to the Jewish religion, or who was not married to a Jew as of September 15, 1935. A second degree, or quarter-Jew, was someone with one Jewish grandparent or an Aryan married to a Jew.

Matters came to a head on 28 September 1938 when Hitler's ultimatum for a surrender of the Sudetenland was scheduled to run out. The *Wehrmacht* was poised on the border, ready to

invade. But equally poised for action was a cabal of anti-Hitler military officers, led by Army Chief of Staff Ludwig Beck, who planned to stage a coup against the Führer if his grab for the Sudetenland resulted in war with the West. In Berlin, of all places, spectators stood silently as the tanks rumbled by. Witnessing this scene, American foreign correspondent William Shirer judged it, “the most striking demonstration against war” he had ever seen.¹³⁰ Yet, despite the growing dismay, Fraü Marianne Karlsruben recollects, “Somehow, one always knew which side I stood on. And similarly minded people always find each other. They can somehow tell. All were anti-Hitler. We belonged to no resistance group. It was just a very clear situation. I thought at the time, some solution will be found. It simply cannot continue as it is.”¹³¹

In 1939, 72,000 first degree *Mischlinge* and 39,000 second degree *Mischlinge* were still living in Germany. The *Mischlinge* issue was very important to Hitler. The initial policy in Germany was to assimilate second degree *Mischlinge* into the Aryan nation, while first degree *Mischlinge* were to be considered like Jews. Over the winter of 1941-1942, some Nazis proposed that all *Mischlinge* of the first degree be sterilized; however, nothing ever came of this because the Nazis feared the reactions of the many Germans related to the *Mischlinge*. After 1943, *Geltungsjude* were dealt with as common Jews and deported. By 1944, many feared the remaining *Mischlinge* would be rounded up summarily and sent to the camps.

Through the racial designations Jews were declared German nationals but not citizens, meaning they were not allowed to vote or run for public office. *Mischlinge* were considered temporary citizens, and faced the continuing restriction of their rights, until they had none. To

¹²⁹ Yad Vashem. <http://www.yadvashem.org/>. Copyright © 2006 Yad Vashem The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, accessed June 20, 2006.

¹³⁰ Large, 302.

¹³¹ Owings, 43.

further complicate things, the *Mischlinge ersten grades* where segregated even further; the first division known as *Geltungsjuden* resulted in their treatment as full-Jew.¹³² They were restricted and could marry only Jews or other *Geltungsjuden*. The second division consisted of those who had been baptized Christian. Crane cites Nathan Stolfus who reports, “Baptized *Mischlinge* outnumbered *Geltungsjuden* by nine to one, since only eleven percent of *Mischlinge* belonged to Jewish communities.¹³³ As far as the Jewish theologian is concerned, any person born of a Jewish mother is Jewish. But author Lucien Steinberg contends, in Nazi Europe, there were two types of Jews: those who were Jews because they considered themselves to be so, and those who were Jews only because the Nazis made them so.¹³⁴

Valerie and Andrea Wolffenstein, the daughters of a Jewish architect, were baptized and raised as Protestants. Their stories of survival during the chaotic Nazi period are not untypical of experiences others encountered. They tell of Gentiles who were indignant regarding the abuses and cruelty the Nazis meted out upon Jews, and say that many times Gentiles vented their frustrations and feelings. The sisters tell of Germans occasionally giving Jews something, such as a cigarette or an apple. Once, an old Jewish lady, identified by the yellow star was standing in a crowded streetcar. A big Berliner saw her, got up and said “Little Starlet, come and sit down now.” Only one person in the car started to abuse him. He answered quietly, “I can do what I damn well please with my own buttocks.”¹³⁵

In another tale remembered, the Wolffenstein’s relate to writer Eric Boehm the

¹³² Cynthia Crane. *Divided Lives: The Untold Stories of Jewish-Christian Women in Nazi Germany*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000, 28. For additional reading on mixed religious faith see, Susan Jacoby. *Half-Jew: A Daughter’s Search for her Families Buried Past*, New York: Scribner Press, 2000 or Agnes Sassoon. *How My Spirit Survived*, Middlesex: Lawrence & Coe Limited, 1983.

¹³³ Crane, 29.

¹³⁴ Lucien Steinberg. *Jews Against Hitler (Not as a Lamb)*, London: Gordon & Cremonesi, 1970, 4.

circumstances of Fraü Rumpler, an old Jewish associate living in Berlin. Frau Rumpler received an invite from a former maid living in Vienna who offered to help Fraü Rumpler “submerge.” Immediately Fraü Rumpler sought the services of Dr. Kaufmann, a Jewish lawyer who had been procuring false identification cards for many Jews. The fact that his wife was Gentile gave him some freedom of action. Kaufmann had been converted, and belonged to Martin Niemöller’s Dahlem congregation. Unfortunately, Dr. Kaufmann was found out, and the Gestapo arrested him. He was later executed.¹³⁶ As has become known through the revelations of Viktor Klemperer’s diaries; survival rested on the interrelationships between the Jewish and the non-Jewish world.¹³⁷ As Jewish families throughout Germany faced increasing Nazi persecution, there were strange unexplained nuances and surprising contradictions in a small number of Jewish individuals and families. For reasons which are not easily known, some Jewish families lived on in Berlin as others around them were thinned from society. The unique details of Marianne Strauss’s family are just such an exception. While conducting research, her biographer came upon these strange anomalies in the Third Reich’s dealing with the Strauss family, who enjoyed the protection of the *Wehrmacht*’s counterintelligence unit known as the *Abwehr*, whereby the Strauss’s deportation was postponed until 1943. Marianne survived; her parents and other family members did not.

The female interviewees for von Meding’s book maintain that their children had to be protected in two respects in particular: against Nazi propaganda on the one hand, and against taunting rejection from their peers on the other, to which they would have been exposed if they

¹³⁵ Boehm, 80.

¹³⁶ Boehm, 83.

had been prevented from participating in youth events and the various ways in which any government tries to integrate young people. The “women of the 20th July” say this amounted to very hard work pedagogically, since the younger children in particular had to be prevented from making indiscreet remarks to their friends or at school. The women all agree, “Daily life was onerous.”¹³⁸

Women experienced many episodes of personal anguish during the Third Reich in coping with and reconciling the appalling inhumanity, loss of freedom and rights of their neighbors and friends. Zassenhaus exploited her Aryan privilege and the “Seal of the City of Hamburg” she had acquired through a degree in languages, to facilitate the covert evacuation of persecuted Jews.¹³⁹ As an astute observer, not only realizing her own personal struggles to oppose the conditions she became subject, Zassenhaus also perceived defiance in other people as well.¹⁴⁰ She comments about the family doctor, “He never discussed politics; and at times I sensed that, by ignoring current events, he wanted to erase a reality he refused to recognize.” “He never sent us a bill. I wondered why he gave us his help so generously. Was it his way of expressing his silent opposition? What gave him the patience and strength to instill hope when there actually was none?”¹⁴¹

In August 1941, the Berlin community was reeling from the news that Jewish men and women between the ages of eighteen and forty-five were banned from emigrating. The law

¹³⁷ Victor Klemperer. *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years 1933-1941*, New York: Random House Books, 1998 and *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years 1942-1945*, New York: Random House Books, 1999.

¹³⁸ von Meding, xv.

¹³⁹ Zassenhaus, 29.

¹⁴⁰ For additional reading and examples see, Ruth Andreas-Friedrich. *Berlin Underground 1938-1945*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947, 7.

¹⁴¹ Zassenhaus, 30.

affecting women was particularly alarming because it clearly had no military basis. On 1 September 1941 came the proclamation that all Jews over six years of age had to wear the yellow star, evasions of regulations by Jews, which Berlin's size had made possible, now became much more difficult and dangerous.¹⁴² There were occasions, when Jews challenged the oppression of wearing the dreaded yellow star. In numerous cases found in the literature are people engaging in defiance by refusing to wear the star or by choosing at which times they would. In one example Valerie Wolfenstein recalls for author Eric Boehm,

Walking to the villa of my friends in *Neuwestend*, I felt as if I had lost a heavy burden simply by removing the Jewish star. For the first time in years I was outdoors at night, after the eight o'clock curfew for Jews. Even crossing a square planted with greenery or entering a park had been prohibited, and on my daily way to work I had to detour around the *Lietzenseepark*. Now suddenly, as if by magic, I was out at night. The air was fresh, the moon cast long shadows on the clean snow. I felt a new awareness of beauty.

By force of circumstance writes Steinberg, fewer German Jews participated in the resistance against National Socialism. There were far fewer of them, about 300,000 at the outbreak of war, and the most dynamic members either had emigrated or were already under lock and key, while the underground political organizations had been systematically broken up. Two large Jewish groups continued to militate, one, the Herbert Baum Campaign up to 1942¹⁴³, the other, the Union for Peace and Liberty up to the end of 1944.¹⁴⁴

Eric Boehm was provided the impetus for his eventual research on the Nazi period via a

¹⁴² Roseman, 106.

¹⁴³ The Herbert Baum group placed a bomb at the Nazi anti-Communist exposition called *Das Sowjet Paradies* in May 1942. In retaliation for the action, the Gestapo rounded up over a thousand Jewish men and sent them to Sachsenhausen concentration camp. One the Jewish men apprehended was the father of Larry Orbach. Details of Orbach's life in Nazi Germany came be found in, *Soaring Underground: A Young Fugitives Life in Nazi Berlin*, Washington: Compass Press, 1996, 56.

relative, and his subsequent book, *We Survived* is the research result. Boehm was provided with stories of survival and sacrifice and he also became aware of organizations such as *Opfer des Faschismus* (OdF) a society formed by the “Victims of Fascism,” in coordination and in addition to Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic churches offering aid to the persecuted. Boehm eventually learned of more than fifty persons who survived and told tell him of their struggles for life and freedom and who had assisted them.¹⁴⁵

In his introduction given at the April 1988 New York Symposium titled, “The German Resistance Movement, 1933-1945,” Willy Brandt made the following address.

All those individuals and groups who risked their lives by refusing to submit to tyranny may not have been able to stop enforced political conformity in Germany, nor were they able to prevent World War II or the Holocaust. But they certainly bore testimony against the notion of collective guilt by an entire nation, and they did so not only at the beginning but also toward the end of Nazi tyranny.

The symposium essays have been chronicled in a volume edited by David Clay Large. Large writes, “The collection as a whole advances the pleas for a conceptual discrimination that preserves basic distinctions between everyday nonconformity, selective opposition to specific policies and practices, and fundamental resistance aimed at overthrowing the Nazi regime.” As editor, Large demonstrates the differences in approach; Delev Peukert’s call for a sliding scale of dissident behavior with *Nonkonformitat* (non-conformist) at one end and *Widerstand* at the other, compared to Klemens von Klemperer’s insistence that historians must not allow the rather plentiful “weeds” of nonconformity or single-issue opposition to overwhelm that rare and “precious plant” in their garden – full-scale resistance to tyranny. Through this example alone, it

¹⁴⁴ Steinberg, 24.

becomes highly evident the arduous task of reaching a general consensus on this topic, and demonstrates the historicization of the Third Reich and the scholarship mindset during the 1980s.¹⁴⁶

At the end of World War II intermarried Jews comprised ninety-eight percent of the surviving German Jewish population that had not been driven into hiding. These intermarried Jews survived, despite clear-cut Nazi ideology and Gestapo will, primarily because their German partners refused to abandon them. Author Nathan Stoltzfus contends from its beginning, the Nazi dictatorship had struggled economically and psychologically in pressuring these Germans, 30,000 in 1939, into deserting their Jewish partners.¹⁴⁷ Stoltzfus maintains in his essay and in a book which researches the topic in-depth, that the battle of wills between intermarried Germans and the Gestapo came to a head on 27 February 1943.

In a surprise sweep, the Gestapo fanned out across Berlin to capture the city's remaining Jews via code word "Factory Action." As news of the massive arrests were found out, German family members of the affected began assembling on *Rosenstrasse* in front of the former Jewish Community Center where the Berlin Jews were being held. Gathering by the hundreds daily and in thousands as the days wore on, the "Aryan" spouses, who were predominantly women, began to call out together, "Give us our husbands back!" On 6 March, following a week of boisterous protest on Rosenstrasse, Goebbels relented, and ordered the release of all intermarried Jews and

¹⁴⁵ Boehm, xx.

¹⁴⁶ David C. Large. Editor of *Contending with Hitler: Varieties of German Resistance in the Third Reich*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 4.

¹⁴⁷ Nathan Stoltzfus. "Protest and Silence: Resistance Histories in Post-War Germany: The Missing Case of Intermarried Germans," in *Resisting the Holocaust*, edited by Ruby Rohrlich. Oxford: Berg, 1998, 151.

their children.¹⁴⁸

In his essay, Detlev J.K. Peukert discusses working-class resistance, and effectively presents a theory on the interrelation of political resistance and social nonconformist behavior. He purports that the history of working-class resistance in the Third Reich can be properly understood only if it is recognized that working-class “nonconformist behavior” and “resistance” springing from the political labor tradition did not, as a rule, coincide but tended to take separate courses.

Peukert contends that both of these concepts are necessary and they represent the two end points on a sliding scale of dissident behavior by using two parameters; the degree to which the behavior was *public*, ranging from “purely private” gestures to highly visible acts; and the degree of *intentional challenge* posed to the regime, ranging from merely isolated instances of grumbling to the intention to undermine the regime as such. Within this framework we can distinguish among types of conflict on a rising scale of complexity and risk, beginning with occasional, private nonconformism, proceeding to wider acts of *refusal*, and then to outright *protest*, in which some intentional effect on public opinion is involved.¹⁴⁹ Peukert concludes by saying that the result of this approach is the discovery of an astonishing variety in types of “nonconformist behavior” in Germany between 1933 and 1945 but little full-scale “resistance.”

Author Frank Trommler contends however much the German population still identified with their “savior” Hitler, most Germans wanted an end to the war. Amid the permeating uncertainty which had overtaken Germany, normalcy, says Trommler was what Germans craved.

¹⁴⁸ Stoltzfus, 152. See also, *Resistance of the Heart: Intermarriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.

¹⁴⁹ Detlev J.K. Peukert. “Working-Class Resistance,” in *Contending with Hitler: Varieties of German Resistance in the Third Reich*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 36-37.

Trommler believes the Nazis effectively coerced the population into a treadmill of work, war, and political organization that did not allow time to reflect upon events or come to grips with the overall political situation. He maintains the establishment of a “uniformly stereotypical rhythm” in Germany for which the small and big rituals – from the *Heil Hitler* salute to parades, rallies, and *Reichsparteitage*¹⁵⁰ – had provided the basis. And, indeed says Trommler, as this rhythm engendered a sense of normalcy amid controlled excitement, Germans collaborated willingly, immersing themselves in the present.¹⁵¹

This theory and dialogue is especially profound reconsidering the relationship of State upon citizen through the analogy Victoria Barnett provides at the beginning of Chapter 3; Part I when she describes totalitarian dictatorships. The creation of a sense of normalcy, regardless of the false and illusionary status this creation may have had, is all the more remarkable to analysts researching in retrospect. Clearly, when Germans reacted to single-issue situations, whether eugenics, sterilization, or abortion, or for that matter the case of intermarried Jews, public outcry received concessions from the State.¹⁵² In response to these vocal denunciations of policy, the Nazis were forced to abandon or re-work their initiatives. As before mentioned, the question of how effective the Nazis would have been, *en total* if more citizens had made vocal objections is a point to ponder.

¹⁵⁰ The Nuremberg Rally (officially, *Reichsparteitag*, literally “national party congress”) was the annual rally of Nazi Party in the years 1923 to 1938.

¹⁵¹ Frank Trommler. “Between Normality and Resistance: Catastrophic Gradualism in Nazi Germany,” in Michael Geyer and John W. Boyer, *Resistance Against the Third Reich: 1933-1990*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, 130-131.

¹⁵² For additional reading on Catholic resistance to Nazi eugenics see, Donald Dietrich. “Catholic Resistance to Biological and Racist Eugenics in the Third Reich,” in *Germans Against Nazism: Nonconformity, Opposition and Resistance in the Third Reich* edited by Francis R. Nicosia and Lawrence D. Stokes. New York: Berg, 1990, 137-156.

CHAPTER FIVE: NON-RELIGIOUS OPPOSITION

Part I Military Resistance

Tyranny, like hell is not easily conquered. - Thomas Paine

Researchers of military resistance during the Third Reich may contend that military duty combined with personal morals and spirituality proved to be a compelling mixture. The Party's attitude towards the churches, in particular the arrest of Martin Niemöller in July 1937, aroused considerable opposition in the Nazi officer's corp. It is suspected many Germans in uniform saw the attacks on the churches as a threat to their Christianity. Military Intelligence of the German Army (*Abwehr*) proved to be a center of resistance. The major reason for this was Major General Hans Oster, the German Army Chief of Staff. He employed several Confessing church pastors in the *Abwehr* which provided cover for their activities and uniquely facilitated conspiracy.

In parallel with SD, the security organization belonging to Himmler's police empire, the *Abwehr* sought on behalf of the *Wehrmacht* to monitor foreign intelligence activity and to gain its own intelligence abroad. Most of its employees were loyal supporters of the regime. At the very top, however, the *Abwehr* contained a number of individuals increasingly hostile toward the Nazis. In 1938, supported by his direct superior and overall chief of *Abwehr*, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, Oster developed contacts with other generals ill disposed to Hitler, above all General Ludwig Beck. Hans von Dohnanyi, the brother-in-law of oppositional Christian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and himself a long-term opponent to the Nazis, joined the *Abwehr* in August 1939.

Alongside Canaris, Oster, and Dohnanyi, the other key anti-Nazi conspirator in the *Abwehr* was Helmuth James von Moltke, who joined its *Ausland-Abteilung* at the outbreak of war.¹⁵³

The *Abwehr* became implicated in the wartime conspiracies against Hitler and many of its leaders were executed shortly before the war's end. The *Abwehr's* involvement in defiance of Hitler has become widely known, what is less known is its involvement in helping German Jews to leave Germany and emigrate abroad.¹⁵⁴ Recently an outstanding study by Winifred Meyer explored one particular *Abwehr* action, "Operation Seven," in great detail. Initiated by a small number of anti-Nazi conspirators at the very top of the *Abwehr*, Operation Seven saved the lives of fifteen Jews and half-Jews, with Hans von Dohnanyi playing the leading role.¹⁵⁵

It could be argued that Hitler's decision on 5 November 1937 to inform his chiefs of Staff of his intentions to overthrow Austria and Czechoslovakia (he envisioned an expansion of Germany's living space) was great cause for concern. The audience was horrified, not so much at the thought of war, but at the thought that the proposed war was one which Germany might not win. Hitler reacted to his doubting and pessimistic military leaders by removing them from their posts. Namely, Generals Blomberg and Fritsch were relieved of duty as they had already attracted notoriety for their criticism of Hitler's earlier military proposals whereby Hitler had been looking for an opportunity to be rid of them¹⁵⁶

Two of Hitler's distinguished military officers were active in resistance; Protestants Colonel General Ludwig Beck and Fabian von Schlabrendorff. Beck chose to resign in 1938 rather than participate in Hitler's military debacle to "smash Czechoslovakia." Beck became

¹⁵³ Roseman, 131.

¹⁵⁴ Roseman, 131.

¹⁵⁵ Roseman, 135.

¹⁵⁶ Balfour, 110.

highly active in subsequent plots to oust Hitler. Fabian von Schlabrendorff was Beck's accomplice within resistance efforts. Beck would later team with Karl Goerdeler, mayor of Leipzig, to form the Beck-Goerdeler group, conspirators responsible for the July 20, 1944 plot against Hitler's life. The attempt which will be discussed later was unsuccessful in eliminating Hitler, and the fallout was spectacular as Hitler retaliated by executing nearly 5,000 suspected conspirators.

In October 1938, during a victorious speech to the *Reichstag* Hitler proposed to the Western Powers that they should make peace; the proposal was rejected by the Prime Ministers of France and Britain. But before these countries could respond to his speech, Hitler ordered his generals to make plans for an attack on France through Luxembourg, Belgium, and Holland. When told to be ready by mid-November, the generals were so alarmed as once again to consider removing Hitler.¹⁵⁷ Neither the military attack, nor the ousting of Hitler was carried out. It would prove to be one of a series of moments where Hitler's time in power had managed to remain secure.

The combined destruction of the Jewish synagogues which spurred political resistance and Hitler's decision to initiate another war were moments when personal inner resistance became palpable for a growing number of Germans.¹⁵⁸ From all points of view the prospects which any level-headed German could see for his country from the autumn of 1943 onwards were such as to make urgent the question of removing Hitler, even if the Allies would not commit themselves over what would happen thereafter. But the problems involved in getting access to the target were still great, as were those of thoroughly yet secretly concerting all the

¹⁵⁷ Balfour, 116.

steps to be taken against the rest of the leadership after the lynchpin had been disposed of.

Balfour contends it was through these combinations of reason that caused Count von

Stauffenberg's¹⁵⁹ attempt of 20 July, 1944 to fail.¹⁶⁰

When asked what she thought Germany would have looked like if the plot had succeeded, Stauffenberg's widow Countess Nina Schenk von Stauffenberg replied, "Well, everyone who was involved in the preparations was clear that an occupation of Germany by the Allies was inevitable." And to von Meding's comment; [already for a long time, there had been nothing more to "save." One merely sought to keep more people from dying...] The Countess then said, "And to demonstrate to the world, that there was a *Widerstand*. I think it is misleading to say the *Widerstand* only began when people noticed that all had been lost."¹⁶¹ Despite evidence to the contrary, many people assess the resistance Germans mustered against Hitler as being less than it should have been or discount most of the efforts as too passive in their approach to have had any profound effect at all.

On December 22, 1942 Harro and Libertas Schulze-Boysen were executed. Libertas was a childhood friend of one of the afore-mentioned Wolffenstein sisters. Libertas' husband, an officer in the *Luftwaffe* headquarters had been chief of an extensive resistance group which worked actively against the Nazis. They obtained military information that they then broadcast on their own secret radio station. Harro attempted to have himself transferred to Supreme Headquarters in order to assassinate Hitler, but before he could initiate the transfer the group was

¹⁵⁸ Alison Owings. *Frauen: German Women Recall the Third Reich*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993, 4.

¹⁵⁹ For additional reading about Count Claus von Stauffenberg see, Peter Hoffman. *Stauffenberg: A Family History, 1905-1944*, Cambridge: Ambridge University Press, 1995.

¹⁶⁰ Balfour, 128.

¹⁶¹ Countess Nina Schenk von Stauffenberg in an interview with author, Dorothee von Meding, 186.

found out and arrested. One of the few survivors of the Harro group was playwright Günther Weisenborn.¹⁶² It is unclear from details gleaned from the Holffenstein sisters of the Harro group, whether the group had any possible connection to the 20 July 1944 plot, or was another of such groups operating independently within the military command.

¹⁶² Boehm, 85.

Part II Student Activism

Opponents of the regime took new heart from the Stalingrad disaster, and their limited revival resulted in a spread of illegal sheets and surreptitiously daubed graffiti, attacking Hitler “The Stalingrad Murderer.” In Munich, the Stalingrad disaster prompted a group of students who, largely inspired by moral and religious idealism, had the previous year formed *die Weiße Rose* (the White Rose). The group circulated anti-Nazi leaflets in Munich University, to announce a public demonstration of their detestation for Hitler and Nazism in a defiant manifesto displayed all over the university buildings:¹⁶³

Fellow Students! The nation is profoundly shaken by the defeat of our troops at Stalingrad. Three hundred and thirty thousand Germans have been senselessly and irresponsibly led to death and destruction through the cunning strategy of a corporal from World War I. Our Führer, we thank you!...Fellow Students! The German people look to us! As in 1813 the people looked to us to destroy the Napoleonic terror, so today in 1943 they look to us to destroy the terror of National Socialism. Beresina and Stalingrad are burning in the east; the dead of Stalingrad adjure us...

Though open opposition, as the White Rose group showed, was futile against the might of the Gestapo, resistance groups were necessarily compelled to continue their work in secrecy and isolation. Their hostility to the Nazi regime was now far less out of touch with the climate of opinion than had been the case even a few months earlier, before Stalingrad.¹⁶⁴ Kershaw’s research in this area is astounding. He states,

The White Rose itself evidently gave rise to rumors, widely circulating in Bavaria and in many other parts of Germany ‘about large demonstrations of Munich students’ unrest, and even revolutionary feeling in Munich, ‘and people were talking about graffiti and fly-leaf propaganda with a Marxist content on public buildings in Berlin and in other cities.’

¹⁶³ Kershaw, 194-95.

¹⁶⁴ Kershaw, 195.

He cites, as a play on the official Nazi designation of Munich as “Capital of the Movement,” it was now dubbed unofficially the ‘Capital of the Counter-Movement’; it was said that propaganda advocating the restoration of the monarchy was increasing, that it was no longer advisable to use the “*Heil Hitler*” greeting or wear the Party arm-badge, and that ‘sooner or later’ a revolution could break out in Munich. Various reports confirmed that the ‘German Greeting’ was indeed seldom used now in southern Bavaria, and was sometimes demonstratively refused by relatives of ‘fallen’ soldiers. Jokes and witticisms about the Führer proliferated.¹⁶⁵

An excellent examination of Hans and Sophie Scholl as well as the White Rose is presented by authors Annette E. Dumbach and Jud Newborn. Through their collaborative effort, they gathered personal memoirs and interviews with the surviving members, providing a unique portrayal of the Scholl’s. Especially interesting are the memoir and diary entries made by Hans and Sophie, which give incredible insight into their personal character and their reactions to Nazism and the world around them. Dumbach and Newborn write that Sophie was a very introspective and thoughtful young woman. Her musings may not have been representative of the average German girl, but the authors contend that they were not extraordinary either.

They maintain that since the late nineteenth century, young people in Germany had been turning to nature to escape the constricting society they found around them. The *Wandersvogel* (birds of passage) were groups of youths, especially students, mostly male, who hiked through the mountains and camped throughout the wilderness. They represented a growing German tradition and way of life for young people. Literature and philosophy as well as song and poetry

¹⁶⁵ Kershaw, 195.

grew out of this tradition and until the onset of war the search for deeper truths continued among the educated youth of Germany.¹⁶⁶ Their yearning for freedom did not, however, translate into political activity or movements for social change. Their deep admiration for “exotic” folk cultures all over the world did not necessarily imply an acceptance of ethnic minorities at home. Consequences of Herr Scholl being denounced by his secretary sent shock waves through the Scholl family, and Sophie especially reacted in dismay to the news. A deep foreboding and fear of the Gestapo taking her father away caused Sophie a lot of anguish.

When Sophie arrived in Munich to pursue university studies in May 1942, Dumbach and Newborn contend that her brother Hans had already made the crucial and secret decision that would determine his fate. Together with his friend Alexander Schmorell, Hans decided to *act*, to move from the realm of “spiritual resistance,” or “inner emigration,” and commit to overt opposition to the Nazi regime.¹⁶⁷ In the same year as Hans’s turning point, in 1936, when membership in the Hitler Youth had become compulsory, gangs of hostile young men began to appear in the cities of Germany and especially in industrial districts. Among them were the children of workers with some degree of class consciousness; Communists were to remain the firmest opponents of the regime, suffering extreme torture at the hands of the Gestapo and in the concentration camps. But most young people seem to have been consciously “unpolitical.”¹⁶⁸

The leaflets of the White Rose began to appear in Munich in mid-June 1942. The city had seen nothing like it in many years; Dumbach and Newborn suggest that it was perhaps only in the early months after Hitler’s takeover had such lengthy and passionate anti-Nazi tracts been

¹⁶⁶ Annette E. Dumbach and Jud Newborn. *Shattering the German Night: The Story of the White Rose*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1986, 15-16.

¹⁶⁷ Dumbach and Newborn, 25.

¹⁶⁸ Dumbach and Newborn, 52.

circulated.¹⁶⁹ At the University of Munich, news quickly spread of the leaflets; reading such literature without reporting it to the Gestapo was a crime. Among the students there was a flurry of tension and excitement, as some students did turn the leaflets in, many did not.¹⁷⁰

The groups of people with whom the Scholls associated and who influenced or reinforced their thinking along anti-Nazi lines are not completely unknown. Hans and Sophie were of an era in which German existential thought was heavily linked to German romanticism and Russian nihilism. This kind of thinking that forces man to choose, to act in order to be, and to accept the responsibility of action, was profoundly part of the intellectual and ethical currents in which Hans and Sophie and many others like Dietrich Bonhoeffer became attuned. Dumbach and Newborn present this theory and suggest this sort of thinking permeated serious intellectual thinkers within the Third Reich and was a crucial factor in the resistance that developed.¹⁷¹ In reading the work of Dumbach and Newborn, one is left with a deep impression of Hans, and especially Sophie Scholl. This author is moved by the complete conviction and dedication of Sophie towards following her inner voice of goodness. It would seem that in the contemporary world among young woman, Sophie was indeed extraordinary despite the book's authors' contentions.

Eventually the participants of the White Rose became known to the Gestapo. In her responses to Gestapo questioning regarding her involvement in the creation and distribution of the leaflets, Sophie refused to incriminate her brother and took full responsibility for her acts and involvement. Her interrogator tried to explain the National Socialist "worldview" to her, to show her what Adolf Hitler had accomplished. Sophie replied, "You're wrong. I would do it all over

¹⁶⁹ Dumbach and Newborn, 74.

again – because I’m not wrong. *You* have the wrong worldview.”

In his diary, Friedrich Reck-Malleczewen, a member of the nobility soon to be executed at Dachau for failing at age sixty, to answer a civil-defense conscription wrote this of the White Rose,¹⁷²

I never saw these...young people. In my rural isolation, I only got bits and pieces of the whole story of what they were doing, but the significance of what I heard was such I could hardly believe it...They died radiant in their courage and readiness for sacrifice, and thereby attained the pinnacle of lives well lived...We will all of us, someday, have to make a pilgrimage to their graves and stand before them in shame.

¹⁷⁰ Dumbach and Newborn, 78.

¹⁷¹ Dumbach and Newborn, 98.

¹⁷² Friedrich Reck-Malleczewen. *Diary of a Man in Despair*, New York, 1945, as quoted by Annette E. Dumbach and Jud Newborn, 241.

Part III Ethical Humanism

You never know how well off you
are until you're doing worse – Dr. Carl Joseph

In 1932, it was not a question of whether Hitler should come to power, but on what terms. The upper-class Nationalists were divided into those who did not trust him, and those who trusted in their ability to control him.¹⁷³ Michael Balfour contends there has been much discussion as to who was to blame for allowing the Nazis to achieve power. Only relatively few people were wholeheartedly in favor of the Nazis at the beginning, which explains why so many others were able to deny that they had ever really been Nazis themselves. Once Hitler gained the Chancellorship and began to consolidate his power and influence, there were fewer and fewer people who by 1933 had both the will and the resources to put up an effective stand on behalf of democracy.

In 1933, the situation inside as well as outside Germany was that vast sections of society rejected anti-Semitic atrocities. Even in the National Socialist Party itself, there was very little support for the proposed “Final Solution;” but at the same time the idea that the rights of the Jews ought to be restricted, that they were “not like other Germans,” met with general approval, and anti-Semitism certainly did not cause Hitler to lose favor; in fact it increased his prestige if to a lesser degree than it would have done a few years earlier.¹⁷⁴

Author Lucien Steinberg contends the Judeo-German symbiosis was so ancient and so deep-rooted that Nazi anti-Jewish measures inside Germany, measures intended to isolate the Jews and set them apart, did not receive unanimous support, and at the outset, Nazi internal

¹⁷³ Michael Balfour. *West Germany*, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1968, 95.

courts often had to institute proceedings against Party members who continued to patronize Jewish shops. Even in 1941, when the yellow star was introduced in Germany, the Gestapo was ordered to arrest Germans “guilty of public manifestations of sympathy” towards the wearers of the symbol. Even an anti-Semite rejects the idea of mass murder, either by pretending that it never happened or by attempting to conceal his or her beliefs under the cloak of less compromising notions; anti-Zionism is one of these and currently wide-spread, although anti-Zionists are not necessarily anti-Semites.¹⁷⁵

The Nazi State by no means fulfilled all the expectations which had been placed on it, for the good reason that it had been represented as meaning so many different things to different people as to put out of question the possibility of satisfying them all.¹⁷⁶ All those associated with institutions and spheres of life which were being “coordinated” resented (unless fervent Nazis themselves) the pressure put on them and the loss of autonomy. It took a good deal of time for members of a legalistically-minded society to realize that resistance to the legal order might be justified on moral grounds.¹⁷⁷ But, until that epiphany occurred and for some it never did, Nazism grew and spread, and as it spread, Hitler’s vision of a greater Germany began to unfold.

In 1933, the State did not crumble, the army did not intervene, and civil-war did not break out. German nationalists could take satisfaction from the apparent orderliness and the absence of large-scale violence which accompanied Hitler’s takeover. Today, this picture of the Nazi seizure of power seems at best rather disingenuous. After all, Nazi activists did not shrink

¹⁷⁴ Steinberg, 19.

¹⁷⁵ Lucien Steinberg. *Not as a Lamb: The Jews against Hitler*, Westmead, Farnborough, Hants, England: Saxon House, 1974, 19.

¹⁷⁶ Balfour, 98.

from violence; indeed they glorified in it.¹⁷⁸ Six months after Hitler became chancellor, fifty thousand people from the various arts had fled Germany. Some left because they were Jews or married to them. Others suspected restrictions placed upon artists was only the beginning of what lay ahead.

Among those fleeing, were also Germans from the middle- and upper-classes who refused to tolerate the wait and see attitude that had permeated society.¹⁷⁹ Those who remained in Germany tried to protest by writing or speaking in “slave language” or “coded” speech. Sooner or later they were forced into silence. Editor and Nobel Peace Prize winner Carl von Ossietzky was sent to a concentration camp for his “non-conformist” offences. In the camps, a few artists and intellectuals secretly managed to produce and hide their work in clear defiance of regulations and in spite of dire consequences should they be discovered.¹⁸⁰ For Ossietzky, his decision to remain in Germany instead of taking exile to a safe haven is borne out in his words¹⁸¹

When someone who opposes the government leaves his country, his words soon sound hollow to those who remain. To be more precise, in the long run the pamphleteer cannot survive if dissociated from everything he is fighting against, or fighting for; he will simply lapse into hysteria and distortion. To be really effective in combating the contamination of a country’s spirit, one must share its entire destiny.

Balfour contends that in any case whereby an individual was shocked by the cruelty, the violence, and the denial of human rights, one could not find much positive action to take beyond

¹⁷⁷ Balfour, 99.

¹⁷⁸ Richard Bessel. “Political Violence and the Nazi Seizure of Power,” in *Life in the Third Reich*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, 1.

¹⁷⁹ Ingrid Greenburger. *A Private Treason: A German Memoir*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973, 44. Greenbruger chose to abandon her otherwise “comfortable” German surroundings for France, where she participated in the resistance efforts there.

¹⁸⁰ Friedmann, *The Other Victims*, 99.

¹⁸¹ Carl von Ossietzky. *Weltbühne*, 10 May, 1932. As quoted by Hans Mommsen in *Alternatives to Hitler: German Resistance under the Third Reich*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000, 9-10.

giving surreptitious aid to victims. Germans did not have to know exactly what went on in concentration camps in order to be afraid of getting sent to one. The post-war claims of Germans being unaware of the camps can be difficult at times to believe considering the multiple infractions which were reason to be sent to one. In the early 1930s, political dissidents, outspoken critics, and labor union members made up the greatest numbers of prison and camp inmates, in many cases these detainees were later released and allowed to return to their homes. Their whereabouts were surely well-known; their absences clearly observed by all.

A lack of a coherent critique against the regime must not be interpreted as total compliance in favor of the Third Reich, since each German community received Nazism differently. Villages and cities were many times very different in their initial associations with Nazism.¹⁸² Village life for example revolved almost exclusively around agriculture and in these areas, Social Democrats and Communists were in fairly large number. Many villagers were enraged by the events they witnessed. Some resisted the Nazi attack on the working-class organizations; others voted with their feet and avoided public parades.¹⁸³ Gerhard Wilke comments, “Nevertheless, open acts of defiance were rare and, in general, the regime did win the approval of most villagers.” Much later, through major changes and enforcements upon villages to board strangers and support unwanted Nazi dogma, the authority and autonomy villagers once had over their own land and property had been lost. These losses were not met with enthusiastic patriotism, but with resignation and silent anger.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² For instance, Schleswig-Holstein was the only German state (Land) to give the Nazis an outright majority in any free election: it voted 51 percent Nazi in the parliamentary election of July 31, 1932. For additional see, Robert O. Paxton. *The Anatomy of Fascism*, New York: Albert A. Knopf, 2004, 64.

¹⁸³ Gerhard Wilke. “Village Life in Nazi Germany,” in *Life in the Third Reich*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, 20.

¹⁸⁴ Wilke, 23.

Being arrested for “sedition,” or possessing literature outlawed by the State constituted enough reason to be hauled off. Many villagers supporting socialist or communist ideology also possessed literature and books on these topics. The intimidation against those who were known opponents of the Nazis was successful, how else could the rest of the populace otherwise be cajoled into compliance except through tactics meant to subdue free-thinking. As William Sheridan Allen’s book demonstrates, there were many early Nazi supporters who swarmed enthusiastically to the fledgling party right away, and who were ever-zealous in their deeds and actions in the name of the National Socialists. But, some others approached National Socialism warily.¹⁸⁵

As Hitler consolidated his authority and inspired support for his National Socialist party he also hoped to gain legitimacy through a Concordat with Rome. The Church had much to gain in the way of uninterrupted freedom for worship and education, but the Nazis treated all promises like tools, to be discarded as soon as their purpose was served. The flood of Church protests against violations of the Concordat culminated in the encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge* (with burning sorrow/concern) (which had to be smuggled into the pulpits) and only resulted in tactics of gradual erosion being substituted for more difficult methods. The existence of the Concordat made official resistance more difficult for fear of giving the government a pretext for denouncing it and made unofficial resistance more difficult through respect for the hierarchy.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ William Sheridan Allen. *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town: 1930-1935*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965, 78.

¹⁸⁶ Balfour, 102. For additional reading see, Bruce Clements. *From Ice Set Free: The Story of Otto Kiep*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Girouz, 1972. Otto Kiep was with the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. from 1927 to 1931 as an embassy adviser, and from 1931 to 1933, he was Consul General in New York. He later established ties with resistance circles, with Hanna Solf and with the Kreisau Circle. As Chief of the Reich Press Office, the name Otto Kiep showed up on the list of the group around the men of the failed July 20 Plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler at the Wolf’s Lair in East Prussia. After his arrest in 1944, he was sentenced at the Volksgerichtshof by Roland Freisler

The social isolation of resistance, which was true of all its political and intellectual factions, is another reason why its activities were largely focused on drafting schemes for a new social and political order.¹⁸⁷ There was one organization in Germany which did succeed for a long time in putting up a successful resistance to Nazism, according to Balfour. The Prussian-dominated *Reichswehr* was once described as the “the gentlemanly form of emigration.” Balfour suggests that this one exception shows that the only hope of security against Nazism lay in superior and organized force.

During Hitler’s rise to power, the Kreisau Circle, a group of intellectuals and disgruntled conservative elites gathered at the estate of Count Helmuth von Moltke in Kreisau, Silesia. Although the group discussed ideology and wished for the removal of Hitler and later an end to war, the group is not known to have done much more than gather and talk about these issues. They were however, considered to be demonstrating behavior opposed to the state, and summarily the group was infiltrated in January 1944, whereby Moltke was arrested and later convicted of treason. After the events of the July 20, 1944 attempt on Hitler’s life, Moltke was executed along with the aforementioned 5,000.¹⁸⁸

On 12 October 1944, following a friend’s denunciation, a young widowed writer and mother of two children was arrested at her home in Kirchanschöring, a village on the River Salzach in Bavaria, and taken to the women’s prison in Traunstein to await her trial. The charge was high treason; the writer was Louise Rinser. Having already attracted the disfavor of the Nazis in 1942, she had been banned from publishing and was under Gestapo surveillance.

to death, and one month after the plot's failure, on 23 August 1944, Otto Kiep was put to death at Plötzensee Prison in Berlin.

¹⁸⁷ Mommsen, 38.

¹⁸⁸ William L. Shirer. *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960, 1017.

Rinser was a committed socialist, politically wide-awake, and astutely alert to the cross-currents of the times, and she possessed a deep aversion to the attitudes which created and perpetuated societal hatred.¹⁸⁹ Her *Prison Journal* was written on the miniscule scraps of paper she could gather and hide while in the Traunstein prison. Her fortitude to withstand the terrors and heartbreak of incarceration helped her to survive. Her diary is a testament to resilience in the face of adversity and hatred.

Rinser never abandoned her ideals or beliefs. She continued to maintain her defiance against Nazi tyranny while in prison through the only ways available to her; through a hunger strike (passive resistance), and by talking back on several occasions to the warders and wardresses who harangued her on a daily basis (non-compliance).¹⁹⁰ Rinser prevailed over her ordeal and continued to speak out against hatred and injustice through her many other books and stories and through her involvement with actions and movements committed to compassion.

Author Peter Wyden tells that during preparations for his family's move to America they were forced to downsize their household and took up a new residence while awaiting departure. As it turned out, the tiny apartment they acquired was situated right next door to German author Erich Kaestner. Kaestner had fallen into a sad circumstance, according to Wyden, since the Nazis had banned and burned books he authored. Kaestner was constantly being questioned by the Gestapo and was often harassed and arrested according to Wyden's recollections. Wyden says Kaestner let it be known, in his low-key, sardonic way, that he thought the Nazis were "crazies."¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Michael Hulse. Introduction to, *A Women's Prison Journal: Germany, 1944*, New York: Schocken Books, 1987, v-vi.

¹⁹⁰ Luise Rinser. *A Women's Prison Journal: Germany, 1944*, New York: Schocken Books, 1987, 21-23.

¹⁹¹ Wyden, 49.

Kaestner stayed on in Germany as a deliberate gesture of defiance. Possibly he thought of himself as a civilized German who was not going to let a bunch of hooligans run him out of his own *Vaterland* (fatherland). This notion was typical among many Jewish Germans and other groups of people who being maligned by the Gestapo and Third Reich thought because they were good Germans things would return to normalcy. Half a century later, psychologists and sociologists continue to interpret the reasons and apply such diagnoses as “blindness,” “mass delusion,” “ghetto mentality,” and “denial of reality” to attempt to explain why people failed to run from Nazism at the first chance.¹⁹² Wyden speculates that it was Kaestner’s sizable income and international notoriety that kept him alive. Great fortunes were a means to survive, but were by no means any guarantee that one could escape. Many people’s assets and businesses were seized, making any attempt to leave Germany all the more difficult, if not nearly impossible. For many Jews contemplating emigration, the decision to wait in the hopes things would improve became instead a death sentence.

Despite the danger to themselves and others, there continued to be pockets of resistance. Underground networks developed and many of the groups met under the cover of sports clubs that were not part of the Nazi structure. Social Democrats, Communists, and other groups worked to smuggle Jews and others in danger out of the country. They distributed anti-Nazi literature which was very dangerous, as most persons known to have been members of outlawed political parties were under persistent Gestapo surveillance.¹⁹³ Berlin Jews for example, who subsisted illegally were known as “U-boats,” and communicated through what was then called *Mundfunk* or “mouth radio.” This system carried life-and-death news to those living under the

¹⁹² Wyden, 49.

Nazi radar. Reports of other U-boater's picked up by the Gestapo were passed along via the *Mundfunk*, as well as the whereabouts of safe houses, and where illegal documentation might be had for a price.¹⁹⁴

As the Nazis grip on Berlin Jews tightened and the number of illegally hidden U-boats grew, an underground trade in doctored and forged documents began to flourish. Documents could preserve life, and dozens of Jews and their helpers worked in this new growth industry. Passports of deceased foreigners were collected by the Gestapo and could sometimes be bought from a corrupt officer who "forgot" to burn them as ordered. He charged 400 marks apiece- a month's salary for most people. Later, the Nazi net tightened further and genuine blank work papers would fetch 3,000 RM, sometimes 4,000.¹⁹⁵

Many Jews were the creators of these illegal documents, in addition to being U-boats in hiding. Some of the forgers operated without discovery for the entire Nazi period, others were less fortunate and were denounced or had a run with bad luck and were found out by other means. Guenther, a childhood friend of Peter Wyden was quite successful in creating highly-convincing illegal documents which helped many persecuted Jews escape Berlin. Guenther persisted in being a constant thorn and embarrassment to the Gestapo. Despite his boldness, the Gestapo never succeeded in making his capture, although they tried for years to apprehend him.

¹⁹³ Friedmann, *The Other Victims*, 111-12.

¹⁹⁴ Wyden, 14. Also see, Lucien Steinberg, *Not as a Lamb: The Jews against Hitler*.

¹⁹⁵ Wyden, 132.

CHAPTER SIX: LIFE IN GERMANY

Part I Growing Up With Hitler

The state is a means to an end. Its end lies in the preservation...
of a community of physically and psychically homogenous creatures...- Adolf Hitler

Eleven year old Peter Weidenreich (now Wyden) relives his youth and those of his friends in a book titled, *Stella*. In an excerpt from his book he tells of one bold day he decided to resist.

I froze, says Wyden, it was 1934 in my public high school in the western suburbs of Berlin. I was eleven years old, and only one of two Jewish boys in a school of about 800. Hitler's presence-by-loudspeaker was nothing unusual. The Führer's speeches interrupted our classes often, and our ensuing routine never varied. When Hitler subsided, everyone rose, extended the right arm in the Hitler salute, and yelled, "*Heil Hitler!*"

That was the law. It was also mechanical, a commonplace, like pledging allegiance to the flag, except that we had to hail Hitler all the livelong day. I had always joined in, feeling foolish to be hailing this crazy person. Foolish but not guilty; in my family and among our friends, Hitler was tolerated with bemusement. We thought of him as a nut who had by some inadvertence, been temporarily permitted to ascend to a position of power.

That morning in 1934, some unaccustomed bulb lit up in me, I wanted to resist. Without much thought I leaned against my desk with both arms, as if in need of support. I wanted to appear unable to straighten up sufficiently to give the salute. It worked. I didn't salute Hitler, and felt triumphant. It had been easy. That afternoon a few rocks flew in my direction as I left school. They didn't hit me. The air had been let out of my bicycle tiers, but the tires were intact and I had no trouble pumping them up.

Nevertheless, I was scared. I kept thinking about a recent school camping trip. We were hiking in the *Riesengebirge* Mountains, and I was the only Jewish student in the group. A cluster of singers in Hitler Youth uniforms directly behind me. Lustily they chanted a popular Nazi marching song: "*Und wenn das Judenblut vom Messer spritzt, dann geht's nocmal so gut!*" ("And when Jewish blood spurts from our knives, everything'll go along better!") I said and did nothing.

There was no point in complaining to the homeroom teacher, Dr. Volk.

He wore a red Nazi Party badge that seemed to me particularly enormous, and instructed my class that Jews were direct descendants of the devil; everyone turned to look at me, presumably to check me out for horns. So, thinking of the knives and my bicycle tires, I never again failed to salute in public school. I decided that my “resistance” had been childish and futile, not brave.¹⁹⁶

As Hiltigunt Zassenhaus recalls her childhood years, she remembers the evening of the raids and destruction upon the Jews, their stores, and Synagogues. “Although most of the Jews were released after a few days, it was now obvious that it was only the beginning. But around me life seemed to go on as always. Despite what happened, people stood idly watching or turned casually away. I could not tell what they thought or felt...I heard no open protest.” Her younger brother remarked to their mother upon witnessing the scene, “You have taught us much,” “but you never told us there are evil people.” Their mother paused a long time before replying, “Let us not think about that. Let us answer the evil with good.”¹⁹⁷

Sixteen year-old Arthur Khan remembers the *Reichstag* fire and being incredibly overwhelmed such a thing could be allowed to happen. He and his brothers listened for the sirens and the fire trucks that never came to put out the fire. Arthur’s father then seized the boys’ mother saying, “The *Reichstag* is burning, can’t you see it’s time to leave?”¹⁹⁸ But she dismissed the events as “temporary madness.” So, contrary to Wyden’s contention that Jewish women were most easily ready to depart Germany, in Arthur Kahn’s family it was just the opposite; even with visas offering safe passage to South Africa his mother refused to flee.

¹⁹⁶ For other childhood recollections and additional reading on growing up in the Third Reich see, Marianne Mackinnon. *The Naked Years: Growing up in Nazi Germany*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1987 or Hans J. Massaquoi. *Destined to Witness: Growing up Black in Nazi Germany*, New York: Harper Perennial, 2001.

¹⁹⁷ Zassenhaus, 33.

¹⁹⁸ Ina R. Friedmann. *Escape or Die: True Stories of Young People who Survived the Holocaust*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1982, 8. For additional reading on life in Nazi Germany see; Christine Arnothy. *I’m Fifteen and I*

Arthur remembers his father leading them up the steps to their new apartment on Spaulding Street in Baltimore, Maryland. “We stared at the mattresses supported by vegetable crates and at the kitchen table with its flaking blue paint, the apartment was otherwise bare.” It was all quite a change from the prosperous surroundings his father’s legal career had afforded the family while living in Berlin. “We have a place to sleep and a place to eat,” his mother said. She somehow had managed to save a small painting and hung it on the wall. “We are home. We will never talk about Germany again. As soon as we learn English, it will be the only language spoken in this house.” Arthur Kahn joined the United States Army and fought against his former homeland in World War II.¹⁹⁹

With his unique heritage, Valentin Senger’s life was anything but boring. He recalls in the spring of 1933 having to give up his bedroom to house a Communist woman wanted by the Gestapo. His mother’s political activity placed her squarely in opposition to Nazism. In one of the Gestapo’s attempts to root out Jews, it enlisted the assistance of the local police districts to draw up lists of all persons whose religion had been entered as “Hebraic” on identification cards.²⁰⁰ When his mother was approached by their neighborhood police representative, Sergeant Kaspar to verify the information on file, Kaspar discussed with her the ramifications of the Senger family being added to the list of Jews being compiled. Kaspar informed Fraü Senger that he would not add the Senger’s to the list, despite her formerly listing their religion as Hebraic. Kaspar thus changed the Hebraic listing to Non-Conformist. He made it clear to Fraü

Don’t Want to Die, Pleasanton: Scholastic Book Services, 1974 and Inga Auerbacher. *I am a Star: Child of The Holocaust*, New York: Prentice-Hall Books for Young Readers, a Division of Simon & Schuster, 1986.

¹⁹⁹ Friedmann, *Escape or Die*, 14.

²⁰⁰ Valentin Senger. *No. 12 Kaiserhofstrasse*, translated by Ralph Manheim. NY: E.P. Dutton, 1980, 66.

Senger that she must never again put herself down as Jewish.²⁰¹ Later, in 1935, when he apparently realized the corrected card could draw suspicion, Kaspar replaced the card entirely with a new one.

Senger remembers his teachers at the West End secondary school, the only one to dissociate himself from the Nazis, though ever so cautiously, was Herr Schweighöfer, who taught drawing. “He was the last one to adopt the Hitler salute,” recalls Senger, but even then his way of saluting was so comical that some of the Hitler Youth members in class complained to the Rector that Schweighöfer was insulting the Führer and the new German spirit. “But this did not deter Schwieghöfer who carried on and only raised his arm a little way up.”²⁰² In one of the most deliberate and intensive schemes of his childhood, a mere school project nearly brought the family down and revealed their true Jewish origins.

Senger says it was the middle of 1934 when his biology teacher, Herr Vollrath began instructing the class about “racial science.” One of the first assignments was to sit down with our parents and draw up our family tree. Taking the names on his father’s forged passport as a starting point and appending name after name, his mother constructed a purely fictitious family tree that would stand up under the biology teacher’s scrutiny. The dense foliage of the constructed family tree was nothing but lies. It was decided that instead of the family’s true origins of the Russian-Jewish ghetto, the family heralded from the regions between the Don and Volga Rivers, making the Senger family Volga Germans.²⁰³ Luckily, after they crafted a plausible looking family tree, they copied it and made another for safe-keeping; which proved wise later on when they were continuously filling out new forms and identification cards.

²⁰¹ Senger, 66-67.

Wolfgang Behl at fourteen years of age was outraged his fellow classmates would dare conspire to ostracize the Jewish kids in the class; who happened to make up half the student body. Many of his family's friends were Jews, the idea that Jews should be maligned angered Behl and he refused categorically to agree to such nonsense. He confronted the antagonist saying, "Who in hell do you think you are?" At this, the other boy told him to "shut up you "white" Jew" and pushed Behl to the floor. The boys were already angered over Behl's refusal to join the Hitler Youth, and this latest confrontation caused the ill-feelings to pour forth.

Fisticuffs ensued with other boys getting their digs at Behl who defended himself while getting in a few good jabs. He swiftly made for home, only then realizing the trouble he had undoubtedly gotten himself into. One of his attackers was the son of a party leader, and Behl realized there would be serious ramifications because he had hit this boy in the fight. Behl's mother told him he had "done the right thing" as she quickly helped him pack a rucksack. She helped spirit her son out of Berlin and away from the Gestapo who would be arriving at any moment looking for Wolfgang.²⁰⁴

Months later, after waking to the violence that had occurred the night before, Behl ran home to call the Jewish friends of his parent to offer them a safe place to wait until things returned to "normal." That afternoon, fourteen friends crowded into the Behl apartment while Wolfgang conducted cursory checks of the Jewish apartments around town over the next couple days; when it was finally safe, they all returned to their homes.²⁰⁵ Wolfgang Behl stood up to his classmates, refusing to go along with their measures to intimidate Jewish students in his class.

²⁰² Senger, 76.

²⁰³ Senger, 84.

²⁰⁴ Friedmann, *The Other Victims*, 101.

²⁰⁵ Friedmann *The Other Victims*, 104.

Also sheltering Jewish family friends when furious mobs were rampaging the streets during *Kristallnacht*.²⁰⁶ Behl clearly demonstrated his non-conformity and defiance to Nazi propaganda and directives on a number of occasions. Interestingly, Behl may have possibly also been the recipient of sympathetic favoring at his army physical examination.

Once he had received his letter to report, it seemed a foregone conclusion that the physically-fit canoeist would surely be a perfect candidate; already resembling “Aryan” perfection with his blond hair and blue eyes. Behl was asked his occupation by the doctor performing the examination. Behl replied, “Student of sculpture,” the doctor then instructed him to do ten knee bends which Behl began to do. “Stop” said the doctor, “something is wrong, come up to the platform.” The doctor then held a stethoscope over Behl’s heart and shook his head. “Too bad, heart condition,” replied the doctor. “I couldn’t believe my luck,” says Behl. The only other person excused for service that day was a hunchback. When his mother heard the news she immediately arranged for Wolfgang to see the family doctor to make sure he was okay. “Dr. B. had treated our family for years.” He listened to my heart, “That doctor is crazy Wolfgang you’re as healthy as an ox. But that’s our secret.”²⁰⁷

In a tragic case, a deaf “Aryan” girl whose congenital condition was common within her family was ordered to submit to mandatory sterilization, to protect German purity. A health tribunal had been established to decide who would be sterilized. Those called before the tribunal could not examine the documents used against them. Most did not have lawyers for their defense. Teachers in schools for the deaf, who were themselves hearing, turned over the names

²⁰⁶ *Kristallnacht* also known as Reichskristallnacht (literally Imperial Crystal Night), Pogromnacht and in English as the Night of Broken Glass, was a massive nationwide pogrom in Germany and Austria on the night of November 9, 1938 (including the early hours of the following day). It was directed at Jewish citizens throughout the country and preceded the events of the Holocaust.

of their deaf pupils to the Nazi authorities. From 1934 through 1939 between 350,000 and 400,000 people were sterilized in this program. Franziska Schwarz was one of these deaf students. When she was sixteen, the Nazis knocked at her door.²⁰⁸

Not only was Franziska to be sterilized, but her mother as well. Franziska was defended at the tribunal by her grandfather who previously remarked, “Hitler is a disgrace to Germany.” The grandfather believed that through protest the decision of sterilization could be reconsidered. Unfortunately, his pleas were denied in the case of Franziska; her mother on the other hand promised to not have any more children and thus was permitted to avoid sterilization. Since the matter was officially closed to appeal, Franziska, who objected to the decision finally submitted to be sterilized. While recovering in the hospital, a nurse bringing medication and water was crying telling Franziska, “I’m sorry there’s nothing I could do to help you. With Hitler, you have to be quiet.” Her finger pointed to the portrait of Hitler hanging over the bed. She tapped her temple with her finger, to indicate, “He’s crazy.”

But if Franziska’s nightmare had not already been enough, it soon turned even more bizarre a couple years later in 1938 when she her menstrual period lapsed. It soon turned out she was pregnant. Somehow the doctor had left her uterus intact. Incredibly, through ineptness on the part of the doctor or possibly due to his refusal to perform the sterilization, she remained unsterilized. Her ordeal unfortunately would not turn out favorably. Her baby was taken by other doctors more committed to preserving Hitler’s campaign to ensure Germanic purity. As a further insult, Franziska was ordered to report back to the hospital within ten weeks for her sterilization.

²⁰⁷ Friedmann, *The Other Victims*, 104-5.

²⁰⁸ Friedmann, *The Other Victims*, 64, 68.

She managed to delay this occurring until 21 March 1941 – three years later!²⁰⁹

Detlev Peukert writes specifically about youth in the Third Reich and the policies Hitler enacted to mold the “Aryan” children of Germany’s future into one like-mind. The main arm of the National Socialist youth policy was the *Hitler Jugend* (Youth). By the end of 1933 all youth organizations, apart from the Catholic ones, which for the time being remained protected owing to the Nazi Concordat with the Vatican, had been either banned (like the socialist youth movement) or coordinated more or less voluntarily and integrated into the Hitler Youth like the non-political *Bündisch* (youth movement) and, in late 1933/early 1934, the Protestant organizations.²¹⁰

Not every child who yearned to be a member of the Hitler Youth, the *Jungmaedel* (young girl/maiden) or the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (BDM) (Federation of German girls) was allowed to join of course; anymore than those who thought it ridiculous could decide to not be a member.²¹¹ How many countless children gazed dejectedly upon their friends and classmates enjoying so much merriment wondering why they could not join them? The ostracization and ridicule inflicted upon Jews, *Mischlinge*, and other “social outcasts” were surely monumental in the minds and hearts of young children who understood little about the political turmoil that swirled

²⁰⁹ Friedmann, *The Other Victims*, 74.

²¹⁰ Detlev Peukert. “Youth in the Third Reich”, in *Life in the Third Reich*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, 27.

²¹¹ While engaging in post-war conversation with friends and acquaintances that also grew up during the Third Reich, author Bernt Engelmann made interesting discoveries; one of them pertaining to Hitler Youth. “I had an argument with someone who claimed that almost everyone of our generation was in the Hitler Youth,” remarks Engelmann to friends. “I pointed out that by 1938, when we graduated, the Hitler Youth had had five years in which to recruit, and that many of the youth organizations dissolved by the Nazis had been simply absorbed by the Hitler Youth...and combined with other youth groups had only about seven and half million members, and those numbers were probably exaggerated.” His conversant remarked, “Yes, but don’t you see that this also means that more than a third of German young people were *not* involved in any Nazi organization? For additional reading about women’s recollections of the BDM see, Michelle Mouton. “Sports, Song, and Socialization: Women’s Memories of Youthful

around them, but denied them a sense of belonging all the same.

Typically, Nazi organized youth groups were strictly for “Aryans,” but as in most things, there were exceptions to be found. Ilse Koehn, a *Mischlinge* “second degree” was just one of those exceptions. Her *Grossmutter* (grandmother) on her mother’s “Aryan” side forced her to join the *Jungmaedel* saying, “You will join. We don’t want any trouble.” Her father Ernst, whose mother was a Jew, on the other hand yelled, “Join an organization of those pigs?” He told Ilse that it may be true that all they do is sing and play games, but their very songs and games were designed to teach the Nazi philosophy, and you know that we don’t believe in it.”²¹²

Ingeborg Hecht remembers joining a “German Jewish Comrades’ Hiking Association” with a friend in 1934. For two years says Hecht we spent our Sundays on vacations tramping through the hills outside Harburg and southward across the Lüneburger Heide to Hittfield, Buchholz, and Müden. She maintains the groups’ members didn’t regard themselves as a specifically “Jewish” association; they ventured into youth hostels – not always without a trace of uneasiness – and joined other hikers in the dining hall or around the campfire until the group was forced to disband in 1936.²¹³ She goes on to say that on Mondays she and others waged verbal warfare with the BDM members in our class. Half the pupils in her school were Jewish, and since friendships were still unaffected by racial mania, their debates did not assume a very dramatic form.

Hecht’s book enumerates various Nazi decrees issued during the Third Reich and how

Activity and Political Indoctrination in the BDM,” *Journal of Women’s History*, Volume 17, Number 2 (2005) 62-86.

²¹² Ilse Koehn. *Mischlinge, Second Degree: My Childhood in Nazi Germany*, New York: Greenwillow Books, 1977, 40.

²¹³ Ingeborg Hecht. *Invisible Walls: A German Family under the Nuremberg Laws*, San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1984, 21-22.

these decrees impacted herself and those around her. Hecht and her brother Wolfgang were “privileged Jews,” due to their mother being “Aryan,” but this status did not prevent the Hecht’s from witnessing the destruction of lives and livelihoods in their midst. Interestingly, Hecht’s her brother Wolfgang belonged to a group called *Vereinigung 1937*, originally registered as the *Reichsverband Nichtarischer Christen* (National Association of Non-Aryan Christians) and later as the *Paulusbund* (League of St. Paul). The *Paulusbund*, too organized excursions and hiking tours and held evening meetings, but the group was disbanded before the outbreak of war.²¹⁴ School life came with many contradictions. When a few BDM girls made comments about the non-Aryan status of their classmates, a teacher, Fraülein Riecke, interceded by stating that non-Aryans didn’t belong to one “side” or the other – that they had fallen between two stools, so they must be treated fairly and decently. The class was impressed by her powers of persuasion; many but not all of the teachers were also firmly opposed to Hitler.²¹⁵

Hecht remembers two teachers in particular; one placed herself in great jeopardy to aid persecuted Jews, the other lost special interest in her immediately upon learning of her “half-bred” status. In the first instance, Fraü Flügge devoted herself to the welfare, not only of her pupils but also of their endangered parents. On an occasion many years later, Flügge herself told an interviewer from the *Hamburger Abendblatti*, “I’d heard from a Jewish lawyer that the mother of one of my pupils was to be deported, so I went to the Gestapo.” When Flügge challenged the public official behind the desk, he retorted by saying, “He’d always tried to do his honest duty” he said despairingly, “but now – now I’m expected to compile death lists for that devil!” The person for whom Fraü Flügge had intervened was taken off the list, only to be re-added by one of

²¹⁴ Hecht, 24.

her colleagues on another day.

Fraü Flügge distinguished herself through involvement in direct opposition to Nazi decrees and Nuremburg Laws. Her personal efforts to assist emigrants with false documentation and issue sureties for penniless Jews saved many persons. The items Flügge managed to smuggle out of Germany on numerous occasions offered hope and aided many Jews fleeing Germany. Hecht writes, “The land of Israel has tried to show due gratitude to Fraü Flügge for her efforts and has commemorated her with the highest honor Yad Vashen can bestow.”²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Hecht, 32.

²¹⁶ Hecht, 36-37.

Part II Life At War

Ingeborg Hecht's summary of Nazi decrees is a valuable resource of daily life and effects of National Socialism upon both Jews and Gentiles.²¹⁷ As she iterates the October 24, 1941 decree, she purports that she and her brother Wolfgang were not prepared to forgo our non-Jewish friends. "As long as they had the guts, so did we."

Persons of German Blood who openly display their friendly relations with Jews are to be temporarily detained on educational grounds, or, in more serious cases, committed to a grade one concentration camp for a term of up to three months. The Jewish party will in every case be detained in a concentration camp until further notice.

The anti-Nazis, both active and passive, were in a very difficult position. The perpetual fear of arrest and the self-control needed to avoid detection had in many cases been replaced by profound internal examinations about the validity of German values, and obsession with the problem of guilt and a conflict between remorse and patriotism. Some Germans particularly the youth did more than jitterbug and look dangerous according to Dumbach and Newborn. Having been forced into Hitler Youth, some young people played double roles; after hours they gathered occasionally with criminal elements and tried to disrupt Hitler Youth meetings.²¹⁸

A small contingent of German youth generated opposition in the late 1930s and early 1940s to the Hitler youth groups. Amidst the wealth of evidence of unaccommodating behavior, two groups stand out clearly, groups which shared a rejection of the Hitler Youth but which differed in their styles, backgrounds and actions: the *Edelweisspiraten* (Edelweiss Pirates) and

²¹⁷ Hecht, 93.

²¹⁸ Dumbach and Newborn, 52.

the *Swing-Jugend* (Swing Youth).²¹⁹ The Edelweiss Pirates appeared at the end of the 1930s in western Germany but operated upon a single underlying model regardless of the region they operated from says Peukert. The Swing Youth were not anti-fascist in a political sense- their behavior was indeed emphatically anti-political- but both Nazi slogans and traditional nationalism were profound indifference to them.²²⁰ These groups of young Germans sought their counter-identity in the Nazi-deemed ‘slovenly’ culture of the Third Reich’s wartime enemies, England and America. They openly accepted Jews and half-Jews into their groups – another outrage for the Nazis.²²¹

The Edelweiss Pirates displayed behavior that deviated from the desirable social norm with a political rejection of National Socialism, and its maintenance of an authoritarian, hierarchical and militaristic way of life. Its members spanned the whole range of nonconformist behavior, from conscious non-participation to open protest and political resistance.²²² Nazi authorities could not allow this rejection of Nazism to continue, and undertook grave measures in subduing and eradicating the Edelweiss Pirate membership to end their organized resistance.

W. Breyvogel maintains youth are dependent on the nature of what is experienced and for the most part arrive suddenly to their formulations of ideas and reaction to events. A single perception and feeling, a sole situation, a single glimpse of a struggle, an impression acquired at home, a scene in front of the window, a perception in the ghetto – from one second to another, this can let loose everything in one person, nothing at all in another. True spontaneous reaction.

Breyvogel contends historical research of German youth which considers these situations

²¹⁹ Peukert, 30.

²²⁰ For additional reading about youth protest and the Edelweiss Pirates in particular see, Frank McDonough. *Opposition and Resistance in Nazi Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, 19-26.

²²¹ Peukert, 39.

can methodologically gain a situational analysis which demonstrates an entire spectrum of motives and forms of action. A full-range of dissent behavior ranging from disobedience to “*Resistenz*” to other forms of resistance can be found in the forms of protest displayed by young people.²²³ Housden adds, for youth, and presumably for at least some other people too, the decision to resist could be just as much a spontaneous reaction to a particular situation as a protracted development.²²⁴ This line of thinking tends to highly support the theory proposed by Koonz which maintains resistance, manifest on many occasions due to “single-issue” opposition.²²⁵

Manny Gale was fourteen years old in 1938. Shy and insecure, he chose to take the taunts and beatings of his classmates in the local school rather than attend the Jewish boarding school his brothers attended in Breslau. Upon returning from a visit to Breslau with his father, the Gales came upon thick smoke and flames in their town of Trebnitz. Forced to watch as their synagogue burned and surrounding homes caught fire, they attempted to salvage their own home, but were prevented from doing so. Panic-filled, Manny was separated from his father as mad crowds swirled about wrecking havoc and chaos in the streets. In a terrifying melee, he was beaten by his own neighbors and schoolmates, who were then joined by Nazi SS who descended upon his home and destroyed everything in the house.

²²² Peukert, 36.

²²³ W. Breyvogel editor of *Piraten, Swings und Junge Garde. Jugendwiderstand im Nationalsozialismus*. Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz, 1991, 10-11, as quoted by Martyn Housden, 165.

²²⁴ Housden, 166.

²²⁵ In their book titled, *Shattering the German Night: The Story of the White Rose*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1981, 25, authors Annette E. Dumbach and Jud Newborn provide the following analysis on resistance; The moment of crossing that line – the line separating private (if outwardly conforming) rejection of National Socialism from active resistance – is a hard moment to seize, not only in the case of the White Rose but in countless recorded instances of workers, housewives, and other “ordinary” Germans who resisted the Third Reich. It is as if there was no single discrete, conscious moment of decision when someone said, “Yes, I will act,” but rather an

Manny recalls for author Ina Friedman the response his cousins in America offered to his request to travel there. “You are exaggerating your situation,” “no civilized nation could possibly permit such intolerance. Things will straighten out.”²²⁶ As their home lay in total devastation, all their belongings ruined, their lives seemed lost; just then, a farmer named Johann who had served in the Army with Manny’s father suddenly appeared. “He knocked aside the shards of glass and passed eggs, butter, cheese, bread, and winter apples through the broken window.”²²⁷

Somehow, despite their finances being confiscated and their bank accounts seized, Manny’s grandfather procured five visas from a “contact,” with which Manny, his parents and younger siblings managed to escape Germany. While heading to Portugal, the captain called Manny’s father and handed him a telegram. The captain had received instructions to turn his ship around and return the Gale family to Hamburg where Manny’s father was to be apprehended for his alleged participation in underground activities against the Third Reich. Manny says, “father denied the charges, proclaiming his military service to the Kaiser was proof he was a good German.” The captain took out his cigarette lighter, “I have the authority to arrest you, but if I did not receive the message, I cannot act.” The telegram turned to ashes.²²⁸

In 1943, just before his eighteenth birthday Manny enlisted in the American Air Corps and served in the 100th Infantry Division. Eventually serving in the Intelligence Division, one military mission to which he was assigned successfully gained the release of American and Russian prisoners of war being held in a German camp. Manny Gale was awarded the

accumulating force of rage, of incredulity, of desperation that came together inexorably, gathering its strength over months and years until it crested – and drowned personal fear and doubt.

²²⁶ Friedmann, *Escape or Die*, 23.

²²⁷ Friedmann, *Escape or Die*, 23.

Exceptional Civilian Service Award three times by the American government.²²⁹

Upon recalling his youth and days at school, Hans Eulau emphasized the emotional and psychological reinforcement provided by the [Jewish] youth groups. His memory of the classroom was one of defiance; when the class had to say, “*Heil Hitler*,” the Jewish boys shouted “Drei Liter.” We missed not being able to go to the cinema or the public swimming pools. But, the youth movement became my compensation, it “straightened our backs.”²³⁰ Jews were also subject to increasingly ominous cuts in their food rations. Unless they received covert help recalls Eulau – and many trades people were secretly charitable to their long-established Jewish customers - they wasted away. With the decree of April 20, 1941 which stated, *Foodstuffs received by Jews in packages from abroad are to be deducted from their food rations*, finding enough food to eat become a life or death daily battle.²³¹

In his own recollections of life during the Third Reich, Wolfgang Samuel retells of his childhood and the confusing times in which he grew up. His father served in the *Luftwaffe*, and his mother Hedy, his “*Mutti*” (mama) became the center of Wolfgang’s world. Once at a party she was having in 1943 there was a tall *Luftwaffe* colonel in attendance. After dinner, they drank wine and lit their cigarettes recounts the author, the colonel talked about the war. “The war was lost,” he said, “when that idiot Hitler declared war on the United States of America,” *Mutti* and the other guests didn’t know what to believe what he was saying. “We are winning the war,” one of them said. “No, we are not winning the war,” the colonel replied. He leaned his head back and blew cigarette smoke toward the ceiling. “I’ve been to America,” he said. “I know how big

²²⁸ Friedmann. *Escape or Die*, 27.

²²⁹ Friedmann. *Escape or Die*, 30.

²³⁰ Hans Eulau as quoted in Mark Roseman. *A Past in Hiding: Memory and Survival in Nazi Germany*, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2000, 65.

that land is and what it can do. For every airplane we build, they will build a hundred. They will utterly destroy Germany by the time this war is over.”²³² There were many occasions Wolfgang overheard adult conversations which made no sense to his young mind, yet he knew it was important and serious.

Wolfgang’s *Opa* never said the “*Heil Hitler*” greeting in public, preferring instead to say “*Guten Morgen*,” “*Guten Tag*,” or *Guten Abend*.”²³³ In many such cases others of a like mind found excuses to not say the “*Heil Hitler*” greeting as well.²³⁴ Wolfgang’s *Mutti* received the help of a friend’s father who had once been an SA member. *Mutti* needed to get train tickets that would take us from Berlin to her hometown of Strasburg. It was nearly impossible to get on a train in March 1945 during wartime the author recounts, yet, like so many other times, his *Mutti* managed the impossible. In this situation, the former SA man said, “I have been out of favor for a long time and have not worn my uniform since then either, I hope it still fits.” Then he said, “I should have no trouble persuading the ticket agents to let you get on any train they have running to anywhere” then he added, “Berliners can get nasty when they see anyone in SA uniform these days. They never liked Hitler to start with, and they like him even less today.” We proceeded to the station where we walked to the head of the line and got our tickets without any difficulty says Samuels.²³⁵

One still another occasion, while they were trying to stay ahead of the approaching Russians, they ran into a village fortified with a strong contingent of SS troops, but it was May

²³¹ Hecht, 88.

²³² Wolfgang W.E. Samuel. *German Boy*, New York: Broadway Books, 2000, 12.

²³³ Samuel, 30.

²³⁴ For additional reading see William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965 or later editions. Also, Lagi Countess Ballestrem-Solf, “Tea Party,” in *We Survived: Fourteen Histories of the Hidden and Hunted in Nazi Germany*, edited by Eric H. Boehm. Boulder: Westview Press, 1985, 132.

1945 and for many the war was already lost. Wolfgang's *Mutti* arrived to with important news. "Listen closely," she said, "Our soldiers just informed me that the SS troops are determined to fight the Russians to the end. The SS are stopping all troops coming through the village and are attempting to force everyone to join them. The SS is threatening to execute anyone who refuses. If the SS insist that our soldiers join them to fight the Russians," "Then they intend to fight the SS and make good their escape to the American lines."²³⁶

As the war raged on, more Germans assessed their plight. Even through the closing stages of battle the proportion of "hard core" Nazis and of active anti-Nazis would seem to have been roughly balanced at ten per cent alike. Twenty-five percent had been believers with reservations, forty percent nonpolitical conformists, and fifteen percent passive opponents. The hard core was now in internment or concealment, aware for the most part that their only hope was to lie low and trust to time bringing a reaction.²³⁷

A rarely mentioned detail involving Jews occurred between 1943 and 1945 when over three dozen parachutists from the *Yishuv*²³⁸ were dropped by the British army behind enemy lines in a clandestine mission to aid the Allied war effort. The young volunteers were Jews from Palestine, sent by the *Yishuv*'s leaders to assist and organize resistance among the Zionists in

²³⁵ Samuels, 60.

²³⁶ Samuels, 131.

²³⁷ Balfour, 156.

²³⁸ *Yishuv* is a Hebrew word meaning "settlement." This term (or the full term "Hayishuv Hayehudi b'Eretz Yisrael" which means *the Jewish settlement in Palestine*) was used in the Zionist movement, before the establishment of Israel, to refer to the body of Jewish residents in Palestine. The residents and new settlers were referred to collectively as "the Yishuv." The term came into use in the 1880s, when there were about 25,000 Jews living in Palestine, and continued to be used until 1948, by which time there were about 700,000 Jews in Palestine. A distinction is sometimes drawn between the Old Yishuv, referring to orthodox Jews (most of them non-Zionist, or even anti-Zionist) living in Palestine under Ottoman rule before 1918, and the New Yishuv, referring to the much larger Jewish settlement, who immigrated to Palestine with the Zionist movement, mostly under the British Mandate of Palestine after 1922. Definition provided by Wikipedia.

Germany.²³⁹ Three women took part in the operation, which was the culmination of almost a decade of intelligence cooperation between the *Yishuv* and British military authorities. Warfare and military service have played key roles in national histories and in the fashioning of gender identities write Marilyn Lake and Joy Damousi in an introduction to their recent study of gender and war.²⁴⁰

Also during 1942-1945 American Allen Welsh Dulles was charged with determining the extent and commitment of the oppositional forces to Hitler within Germany's underground. As station chief of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in Bern Switzerland, Dulles' fact gathering later would become an important firsthand account of Allied contact with that opposition, and his book examines the lives of German men and women from every stratum of society who made up the complex web of underground oppositional activity.²⁴¹

In coming to terms with the various ways resistance has been considered and presented herein thus far consider Michael Thomsett's theory of resistance activity being a three-phase development of increasingly dramatic involvement.²⁴²

1. The first phase is alienation, the experience of those who cannot agree with the philosophy of their government. The feeling that their views are not represented in important decisions and actions of the day may lead to a sense of hopelessness.
2. The second step is resistance itself, which may take many forms. A person may simply talk quietly with others about the problems they share. Another may simply slow down his or her work, or purposely

²³⁹ Judith Tydor Baumel. "The 'Parachutists' Mission' from a Gender Perspective," in *Resisting the Holocaust*, edited by Ruby Rohrlich. Oxford: Berg, 1998, 95.

²⁴⁰ Baumel, 96. See Damousi and Lake. *Gender and War: Australians at War in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 1. Since the mid-1980s, a rising consciousness in western society has elicited a number of studies examining women's participation in both World Wars, national struggles, and underground resistance movements.

²⁴¹ Allen Welsh Dulles. *Germany's Underground*, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1947.

²⁴² Michael C. Thomsett. *The German Opposition to Hitler: The Resistance, the Underground, and Assassination Plots, 1938-1945*, Jefferson: McFarland & Company Inc., Publishers, 1997, 1-2.

sabotage government operations through poor performance. The bravest individuals may publish their thoughts boldly and willingly pay the consequences.

3. The third step is conspiracy. When people recognize that resistance is not enough to solve the problems, they come to believe that they have no choice but to conspire with like-minded people and make plans for the removal of the government.

Such circumstances hardly encouraged a revival of political life. But the organized political parties previous to National Socialism had been given leave to organize themselves in the Western zone by September 1945 though they did so at first under close supervision and on a local basis. The most notable innovation was the foundation, as in several other Western countries of a party which sought to rally all the forces in Germany that were both anti-Communist and anti-Nazi under the positive slogans of religion and democracy. Two arguments were prevalent in favor of left-wing parties working together. One was that if such a front had existed in 1933, National Socialism might have been kept from power. The other was to be found in the general agreement that the essential step towards eradicating the aggressive authoritarian influences from German society lay in bringing the means of production under communal control.²⁴³

Kershaw comments that it could be inferred from the available evidence, unsatisfactory though it is in many respects, that as had been the case in 1939, the attempt on Hitler's life polarized sentiments. It seems says Kershaw, "a justifiable inference, too, that, even more than had been the case in 1939, a sizable proportion of the population would not have been saddened

²⁴³ Balfour, 157.

by Hitler's assassination, and viewed his survival as a hindrance to the ending of the war."²⁴⁴

These stories represent only a small number of the daily conflicts which arose as German children grappled with the numerous ways in which their lives became less their own, and more State controlled. Objections to policies of sterilization or mandatory attendance in youth groups are but a couple instances in the myriad ways opposition to authority manifest. The Third Reich mandates were circumvented and altered to make them more palatable, when absolute refusal to accept them was impossible. Creativity and insubordination fostered thousands of opportunities to thwart Nazism on a daily basis. It would be impossible to document each instance, but with the evidence already presented, it is clear that opposition existed and outlets for growing frustration and dissatisfaction developed in as many ways as the mind can imagine.

As dissatisfaction towards the Third Reich escalated, an indicator of popular views of the Party leaders can be seen in the wild rumors which circulated from time to time about prominent figures in the NSDAP. These rumors were no doubt often started by foreign broadcasts or opponents of the regime within Germany. But they were evidently believed by a great many people.²⁴⁵ Clearly, writes Ian Kershaw, "The Party's public standing was extraordinarily low, even in this victorious phase of the war. It was evidently widely felt that its representatives were capable of more or less any form of major misdemeanor." As Kershaw comments about the years, specifically 1940-1945 when Hitler enjoyed the height of his popularity, there existed evidence of festering dissatisfaction among Germans towards the regime.

In the years previous, Hitler had enjoyed autonomy of association with the deeds of his ne'er do well Party members. The "*Hitler myth*" created through seductive propaganda, shielded

²⁴⁴ Kershaw, 219.

Hitler from potential blame regarding complaints of corruption and ensured that Hitler received nothing but sympathy. Kershaw writes, it is incredible, for instance, how seldom allegations of Hitler's material corruption occur in the 1,400 or so cases among the Munich "Special Court" files in which people stood specifically accused of a wide variety of insulting comments about the Führer.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Ian Kershaw. *The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, 163-64.

²⁴⁶ Kershaw, 164.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION MAY 1945

After all, one should have the courage to believe only in what is good.
By that I do not mean one should believe in illusions.
I mean one should do only what is true and good
and take it for granted that others will do the same. – Sophie Scholl

In any case, those who wanted to assume responsibility were for a year or two in a minority while the Allied forces were over-seeing redevelopment. Most Germans wanted nothing better than to recover their breath and collect their thoughts, indeed much of their time was absorbed in securing the essentials of life.²⁴⁷ Berlin by the summer of 1945 became a city divided into four sectors governed by four Allied powers. In the Soviet sector, as in the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany, fear of the Gestapo and the pervasive Nazi surveillance system was now replaced by fear of the occupying Russians and of the Stalinist communism they imported and brutally enforced, with the aid of the German Communists. Jill Stephenson writes that, in the spirit of opportunism, German civilians increasingly sought to deal with their manifold practical problems during the Second World War, and particularly at its end. By early 1945 she writes, “They were looking not for a heroic death but merely an end to the slaughter, and especially, to the bombing.”²⁴⁸

The eastern zone, later to become the German Democratic Republic, with East Berlin as its capital, slipped instantly from one totalitarian regime to another, its population, unlike the rest

²⁴⁷ Balfour, 156.

²⁴⁸ Stephenson, 354.

of Germany, had no chance to breathe freely or to practice democracy.²⁴⁹ “The Third Reich has vanished like a ghost,” wrote Ruth Andreas-Friedrich on 2 May, 1945, yet for her and her friends the surprise and relief at the collapse of Hitler’s regime vanished almost as quickly. As early as May 1945, during the first crisis among the Allies, the conflict between East and West that would turn Berlin into a front-line city became evident.²⁵⁰

By mid-May as survivors were creeping and savaging amid the remnants of their bombed out surroundings, Berliners searched for someone to attest that they were not a Nazi. “Day after day we hear the same stories,” wrote Ruth Andreas-Friedrich. “In the dozens they come for attestations that they weren’t Nazis.” “They each find another excuse. Suddenly each one knows a Jew whom he claims to once have given at least two kilograms of bread or ten pounds of potatoes.” “Each claims to have listened to foreign radio broadcasts.” “Each claims to have helped a persecuted person...’At the risk of my own life,’ ...most of these posthumous benefactors add with modest pride.”²⁵¹

The entire NSDAP seems to have consisted of “frondeurs.”²⁵² Amazing acts of heroism

²⁴⁹ In assessing and discussing thoughts on post-war responsibility, Robert G. Moeller presents interesting dialogue in his essay titled, “Germans as Victims? Thoughts on a Post-Cold War History of World War II’s Legacies,” *History & Memory*, Volume 17, Number ½, Spring/Summer (2005) 152, 147-194.

²⁵⁰ Jörg Drews. Afterword to *Battleground Berlin: Diaries 1945-1948*. New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1990, 260.

²⁵¹ Ruth Andresa-Friedrich. *Battleground Berlin: Diaries 1945-1948*. New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1990, 29.

²⁵² The Fronde (1648–1653) was a civil war in France, followed by the Franco-Spanish War (1653–1659). The word fronde means sling and referred to the pelting of windows (belonging to supporters of Cardinal Mazarin), with stones, by Paris mobs. The original goal of the “revolutionaries” was to limit the king’s power and discuss various grievances; however, the movement soon degenerated into factions, some of which were attempting to overthrow Mazarin and reverse the policies of Cardinal de Richelieu. When Louis XIV became king in 1643, he was only a child, and though Richelieu had died the year before, his policies continued to dictate French policy, under his successor Cardinal Jules Mazarin. It is probable that Louis’s later insistence on absolutist rule and depriving the high nobility of actual power was a result of these events in his childhood. The term frondeur was later used to refer to anyone who suggested that the power of the king should be limited, and has now passed into normal French usage to refer to anyone who will show insubordination or engage in criticism of the powers in place. Definition provided by Wikipedia.

are brought to light: they claim to have spoken to a mixed-blood person in broad daylight despite the fact that the block warden was watching...or to have stopped believing in *it* (Nazism...the Party...Hitler?) a long time ago – the greater their fear the more stupid their excuses.²⁵³

Members of the Party who were unable to show a certificate of good character were subject to forced labor. They were ordered to shovel debris and clear the rubble strewn in every direction.

“We write certificates and serve as character references. As long as we can assume the responsibility, we shouldn’t be vindictive. For twelve years we had time to weigh and judge. We know only too well whom we judged to lightly.”²⁵⁴

One of the most revealing things to emerge from resistance research is that when a large number of people came together in opposition to form a majority, as in Denmark or in Le Chambon, France these groups saved not just individuals, but thousands of people. The rescuing bystanders or the bystanders in general, made the critical difference in the survival of Jews.²⁵⁵ Irving Greenburg writes, the difference in Jewish survival rates in the various European countries is enormous. It ranged from ninety-five percent surviving in Denmark to ninety percent dead in Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania.

The incredible variation in rates of Jewish survival lay not in Jewish behavior, neither in passive nor armed resistance. Armed resistance was a decision how to die, not how to live. Nor was it Nazi behavior that made the crucial difference, because it was murderous everywhere. The single critical difference was the behavior of the bystanders. The more people there were

²⁵³ Andreas-Friedrich, 29.

²⁵⁴ Andreas-Friedrich, 30.

²⁵⁵ Irving Greenberg. Introduction in, *The Courage to Care: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, edited by Carol Rittner and Sondra Myers. New York: New York University Press, 1986, 3.

who chose to resist, the greater was the chance that Jews would survive.²⁵⁶ Greenburg contends that although there was a continuing, growing violence, both legalized and physical against the Jews, it was not completely random.

The whole stage is marked by a pattern: first, there would be an attack on Jews, then an extension of the attack, then a pause. And frequently the pause was used as a time in which the Nazis watched world reaction and gauged whether they could forge ahead or would have to modify their plans. Then, as happened repeatedly, in the absence of significant reaction from the rest of the world or from within its own German borders, the Nazis would resume the attacks on the Jewish community and engage in further oppression.²⁵⁷

This system was continuous. While world reaction was waited for, the immediate response of the German people was also gauged, and in all too many cases, the German populace was silent or grumbled much too quietly. When one considers the notorious euthanasia program, which started off in a tentative way because of mixed popular reaction to it, the program was eventually stopped because it prompted the criticism and protest of the Catholic bishops and then later the Protestant leaders and their families. Greenburg contends the euthanasia program was abandoned because the government did not attain the full confidence and support of the German people. What might have happened had the German people been more vocal about other dangerous programs yet to come?

In the twentieth century we have had numerous demonstrations of the relative inefficacy of individuals or groups of people resisting against the state, with its ability to marshal all instruments of power. If victims are not readily allowed to escape, or if they cannot organize for

²⁵⁶ Greenberg, 3.

defense, then learning how to engage in passive resistance or civil disobedience remains the only plausible tactic, although one of very limited effectiveness. These options were difficult to conceptualize for Central and Eastern European Jews, whose orientation to law and order represented part of their cultural environment.²⁵⁸

I would suggest that possibly only the Germans themselves can examine what happened to them morally and ethically during the twelve years of Nazism.²⁵⁹ Only they could know the complicated truth of what had taken place. This soul searching, of course has been easily undermined by delusion and self-justification. The Confessing Churches record of opposition (and knowledge) on some points, raises the troubling question of why it had compromised on others. Martin Niemöller addressed his colleagues,²⁶⁰

Our present situation is not primarily the fault of our people and the Nazis. How should they have proceeded on a path that they didn't know? They simply believed they were on the right path! No, the essential blame rests upon the church; because it alone knew that the road being taken would lead to ruin, and it didn't warn our people, it didn't unveil the injustice that had occurred or – only when it was too late.

Somberly, Frank McDonough comments, in the final analysis of German resistance to Nazism, all types of resistance and opposition failed. Most notably this could be attributed to the small percentage of people who actively resisted Hitler and his Nazi policies, which numbered less than one percent of the German population. McDonough stresses, however

²⁵⁷ Greenburg, 4.

²⁵⁸ Boehm, 311.

²⁵⁹ The controversy of how West German society should address its Nazi past, has since 1986 been discussed among scholars and historians who research and analyze German history, and is known in academic circles as *Historikerstreit* "historians dispute." For additional reading on historicization of Nazi Germany see, Ian Kershaw. "'Normality' and Genocide: The Problem of 'Historicization'," in *Reevaluating the Third Reich* edited by Thomas Childers and Jane Caplan, New York: Holmes Meier, 1993, 20.

²⁶⁰ Barnett, 198.

historically significant resistance to Hitler was it never gained popular support. Germans instead supported Hitler's attempts to make Germany the dominant power in Europe right to the bitter end.²⁶¹

The scholarly debate continues, seemingly with little convergence among historians and scholars to an agreement of what constitutes resistance and how single action occurrences can be quantified along with more readily acknowledged acts of resistance. The greatest obstacle seems to be achieving a consensus among scholars which both acknowledges the actions of individuals or groups against a totalitarian state, regardless whether they were intended to overthrow the state, while also acknowledging the large-scale motivations which typically are categorized as armed resistance without diminishing them. Recognition for insignificant acts of defiance regardless of their impact, should in this researcher's opinion be included for consideration. An act which counters the mandates of a totalitarian state can significantly demonstrate the loss of rights and privileges of the citizenry within that state; in this case both the Aryan and non-Aryan are culpable for engaging in acts of humanitarianism. It should be noted that the most common single acts of defiance against Nazism the German people committed were acts of humanity and charity towards Jews and other ostracized Germans.

When reflecting back upon her life and the Nazi regime, Emmi Bonhoeffer²⁶² replied,

There was no decisive experience. It gradually developed on its own in the family circle – we were all related. The whole thing was recognized from the start as a calamity. It became clearer and clearer that we were right in repudiating this regime. But one could say that the way the Jews were treated gave one the certainty that one could never come to terms with Hitler.

²⁶¹ McDonough. *Opposition and Resistance in Nazi Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, 63.

When asked if she thought the Holocaust could ever happen again, Leah Hammerstein, a Polish partisan resistance member replied, “Yes, it’s possible. You see, Nazism killed not only people; it killed moral principles. Before you can kill people, you first have to kill moral principle.”²⁶³ Fraü Marianne Karlsruben says it another way, “And with the knowledge of all of it from back then, with the alertness and knowledge, I probably should have conducted myself considerably differently, I probably should have done something. Myself, I ask myself today, would I also have done it if it meant pledging my life? For one must include that, if one is really committed.”²⁶⁴

²⁶² von Meding, 15.

²⁶³ Anflick, 53.

²⁶⁴ Owings, 53. For additional reading about German women and their interpretations and reconciling of the Nazi era see, Joyce Marie Mushaben. “Collective Memory Divided: and Reunited: Mothers, Daughters and the Fascist Experience in Germany,” *History & Memory*, Volume 11, Number 1 (1999) 7-40.

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