

Nazi Resistance in Germany: 1930-1945

by

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Submitted to the Department of History
School of Humanities
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

Purchase College
State University of New York

May 2022

Sponsor: Professor Lisa Keller

Second Reader: Professor Christian J. Bailey

Acknowledgements:

To Professor Keller: I am so incredibly grateful for all of your patience, guidance, and support throughout this process. You've always inspired me to follow my love for history, wherever it may take me. I will always cherish the incredible lessons and skills that you've taught me over these three years. Thanks for everything, Professor Keller.

To my Parents: Thank you for always believing in me. You both have always motivated me to do what I love, and I'm so glad that you were there with me every step of the way. You've shown me endless love and support as I completed this project, and I hope to always make you both proud. I love you forever, I love you for always.

This project was inspired by the love I have for my family in America and Germany. It's my hope to recognize and honor those who fought for freedom from tyranny.

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Chapter 1: Edelweiss Pirates

In Nazi Germany, education was molded into one which benefited the regime's image and goals. Education and youth programs were critical to providing the Nazi Party with loyal citizens and soldiers. Despite the immense influence on education, youth resistance groups arose to combat the authority of the Nazi Regime. These youth groups, such as the Edelweiss Pirates, Edelweißpiraten, directly challenged the values and efforts of the Nazi regime. The Edelweiss Pirates was a resistance group made of smaller loosely organized groups of German youth, which all fought against all forms of authority.

The Edelweiss Pirates were a youth organization which was spread across Germany during the 1940s. The organization was not centralized as there were few clear leaders or group organization. Due to the lack of organization of the groups, information of the Edelweiss Pirates has been obtained through interrogations, prison records, and interviews with an extremely small number of former Edelweiss Pirates. Much of the information provided only surface level information of the groups or included specific information regarding the Köln/Cologne Navajo Pirates. As these groups were made up of children and teenagers, the Edelweiss Pirates did not keep records themselves, but from either verbal or written records from Gestapo or German POWs.¹

The Edelweiss Pirates, *Edelweißpiraten*, were a collection of violent youth groups across Germany that rebelled against all forms of authority.² Their resistance to Nazism was based on their desire to reclaim freedom which was taken by the Nazi Regime. Initially the group was simply a club for fun activities, but as the Nazi Regime came into power their motivations began to resemble and demonstrate political resistance. The Edelweiss originated in western industrial towns, such as

¹ Perry Biddiscombe. "The Enemy of Our Enemy": A View of the Edelweiss Piraten from the British and American Archives." (Journal of Contemporary History 30, 1995), 41-45.

² Wolfi Landstrecicher, "Eternal War on the Hitler Youth": The Edelweiss Pirates 1938-1945." (Portland, Oregon: Venomous Butterfly Publications, 2007), 6.

Köln/Cologne, Oberhausen, Düsseldorf, Essen, and Duisburg. The groups consisted of children who rejected authoritarian control.³ Members of the Edelweiss Pirates were not united physically; however, their anti-authoritarian motivations allowed the movement to gain traction with youth and inspired many to become Pirates themselves.

Despite the Edelweiss Pirates being separate groups, they were unified through their actions and appearances. The Edelweiss Pirates gained their namesake from the Edelweiss flower, *Leontopodium*. Edelweiss is white flower found in a small portion of Europe and Asia; the flower has many different symbolic meanings, such as peace and individualism.⁴ The Pirates wore colorful traditional German clothing such as lederhosen, stockings, and their Edelweiss flower pins.⁵ The Edelweiss flower pins were interchangeable with a colored skull and cross bones.⁶ The risk of simply wearing these uniforms was great, as uniforms which were not approved by the Regime were banned. The Edelweiss' Kittelbach pirates were arrested for wearing the Edelweiss Pirates uniforms, as it disobeyed the Reichstag Fire Law of 1933.⁷ The members also sported long hair and enjoyed pastimes which were banned by the Regime. The ages of the pirates ranged from fourteen to eighteen, similar to those in the Hitler Youth, *Hitlerjugend*.⁸ There are no formal membership lists, but some historians estimate approximately five thousand members.⁹ In Duisburg, the Edelweiss Pirates traveled in groups

³ Katie Kellerman, *The Edelweiss Pirates: A Story of Freedom, Love, and Life* (2006, The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation) <https://www.raoulwallenberg.net/saviors/others/edelweiss-pirates-story/>.

⁴ Andrew Gaumont, "Everything You Need to Know About Edelweiss Flowers." (2021: Petal Republic.) <https://www.petalrepublic.com/edelweiss-flower/#1-edelweiss-flower-meaning-amp-symbolism-%E2%80%93-the-essentials>.

⁵ Housden, Martyn, ed. "Resistance and Conformity in the Third Reich." (London: Routledge Sources in History, 1995.), 84.

⁶ Detlev J. Peukert, "Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life." Translated by Richard Deverson. (London: Penguin Books. 1993), 154-155.

⁷ Martyn Housden ed. "Resistance and Conformity in the Third Reich." (London: Routledge Sources in History, 1995.), 84.

⁸ Wolfi Landstreicher, "Eternal War on the Hitler Youth": *The Edelweiss Pirates 1938-1945*. (Portland: Venomous Butterfly Publications, 2009), 6.

⁹ Katie Kellerman, "The Edelweiss Pirates: A Story of Freedom, Love, and Life."

of sixty to seventy.¹⁰ The groups, despite their small size, worked together to cause mayhem and disrupt the Nazi Regime's authority, and most notably the Hitler Youth.

The Edelweiss Pirate youth groups began as small clubs of children and teenagers, across western Germany. The children and teenagers participated in activities such as camping, sports, games, and outdoor activities. The pirates enjoyed their independence from adult supervision and school; however, when the Nazi Regime introduced the Hitler Youth this independence was threatened. Created in the 1930s, the Hitler Youth, *Hitlerjugend*, and League of German Girls, *Bund Deutscher Mädel*, were youth organizations created and lead by the Nazi Regime. The program provided children ages 14-18 with supervised activities, comparable to summer camp program activities. These programs aimed to indoctrinate German youth:

“The state's primary educational task for the welfare of the German race was to instill a racial consciousness into every boy and girl. This and this alone would ensure that the child would become a valuable member of the national community.”¹¹

In response, the Edelweiss pirates refused to participate and join up with any Nazi youth organizations and eventually left the Hitler Youth because they were unable to afford uniforms or were uninterested in military training and recruitment.¹² The Hitler Youth initially promised a leisurely program for youth, but soon transitioned into one which benefitted the Regime with a constant flow of soldiers.¹³

In 1939, the Nazi Regime established a compulsory membership to the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls for all German children and teenagers. Compulsory service inspired the Edelweiss Pirates' resistance to Nazi authority. As the Hitler Youth gained members, the Edelweiss

¹⁰ Horn, 35.

¹¹ Koch W. Hannsjoachim, *The Hitler Youth: Origins and Development, 1922-45.* (New York, New York: Stein and Day, 1976.), 162.

¹² Martyn Housden, *Germans Against Hitler: Who Resisted the Third Reich and why did they do it?* (1998: New Perspective) www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~smp/germans.htm, 1-4.

¹³ Koch W. Hannsjoachim, *The Hitler Youth: Origins and Development, 1922-45.* (New York, New York: Stein and Day, 1976.), 162.

Pirates began their, “Eternal War on Hitler Youth.”¹⁴ As the pirates gained notoriety among German youth, they would harass and attack the Hitler Youth directly. The Hitler Youth represented the Nazi Regime’s ideals for youth and submission to authority. In addition to physical attacks, the Pirates would rob the homes and meeting places of the Hitler Youth members.¹⁵ The Edelweiss Pirates’ goal was to disrupt and dismantle the Hitler Youth organization.

As the Hitler Youth became more of a threat to the Edelweiss, groups such as the *Fahrtenstetze* (Traveling Dudes) of Essen, Kittelbach Pirates of Oberhausen and Düsseldorf, and the Navajos from Köhn/Cologne, emerged and were mostly youth from working class families. The Pirates had their own form of autonomy. The rapid industrialization and previous economic inflation of Germany, during 1914-1924, forced many families to take their children out of school help to provide for the family. Children would take over factory jobs for lower wages in place of an adult worker, factories such as artisanal industries.¹⁶ Many Pirates left school to provide for themselves and their families, which can explain the lack of indoctrination into Nazism. When out of work, Pirates had more independence from adult supervision as their parents were occupied with their jobs.¹⁷ The Nazi Regime, including the Hitler Youth, claimed that the Edelweiss Pirates were a group of children who lacked a proper work-ethic; however, the Edelweiss Pirates were made up of youth who already had experience in the workforce. Their experiences, as working-class youth, gave them a deeper appreciation of freedom, and when it was taken away, it sparked their resistance.

The resistance efforts of the Edelweiss Pirates took many forms and impacted both the Hitler Youth’s activities and Nazi Regime. Edelweiss Pirates included some ‘peaceful’ resistance through graffiti and leaflets. During air-raids over Germany, the Edelweiss pirates would unite to socialize,

¹⁴ Katie Kellerman, “*The Edelweiss Pirates: A Story of Freedom, Love, and Life.*”

¹⁵ Walter Z. Laqueur, *Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement.* (New York: Basic Books, 1962), 214.

¹⁶ Hugh D. Hindman, “*The World of Child Labor: An Historical and Regional Survey*” (New York: M.E. Sharpe. Inc. 2009), 617.

¹⁷ Detlev J. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany,* (London: Penguin Books. 1993), 163.

share information, smoke, drink, have sex, and graffiti.¹⁸ Graffiti included sayings such as, “The OKW [Military High Command] is lying”, “medals for murder”, and “Down with Nazi Brutality”.¹⁹ Gertrud ‘Mucki’ Koch, a female member of the Red Young Pioneers and the ‘Navajo’ Edelweiss Pirates of Köln/Cologne, wrote and distributed leaflets which spoke against the Nazi Regime. Gertrud wrote the leaflets for German soldiers and Hitler Youth and tried to persuade them to abandon the war effort and return home.

Due to the increased military influence and participation from the Hitler Youth, many Hitler Youth members were convinced by the Edelweiss Pirate’s messages.²⁰ The end of World War II, the Hitler Youth was directly involved in the war-effort. Hitler Youth members were subject to six-months of labor service and two years of military service.²¹ Messages sent by Koch were partially successful; approximately thirty percent of the Hitler Youth left and joined the Edelweiss Pirates. Those who did not leave The Edelweiss Pirates, who created their own anti-Nazi leaflets, distributed leaflets which were dropped from Allied aircraft.²² These leaflets read: “The present Nazi Germany wants to push you into the Hitler Youth where you are to be trained for military career...All this done for one goal: cannon-fodder for Hitler’s insatiable lust for power!”²³ The Kittelbach Pirates, of Oberhausen and Düsseldorf, distributed leaflets which mocked the Hitler Youth organization;

“Why are 15- and 16-year-olds still in the Jungvolk? They should be in the Hitler Youth. But these slackers don’t want to spend their summer holidays in the country helping the farmers. That can be left to 14-year-old girls and old boys and old dears of 70 and 75. The young fellows don’t know how to fill their time in the holidays. But they don’t want to work. Well, send them out into the country, so they learn how to work too.”²⁴

¹⁸Housden, Martyn, ed. *“Resistance and Conformity in the Third Reich,”* 85.

¹⁹ Wolfi Landstrecicher, *“Eternal War on the Hitler Youth”*, 8.

²⁰ Perry Biddiscombe. *“The Enemy of Our Enemy”*

²¹ Louis L. Snyder, *Encyclopedia of the Third Reich*,(New York: Marlowe, 1998) ” 161-162.

²² Daniel Horn, *Youth Resistance in the Third Reich: A Social Portrait*. (New York: Journal of Social History. 1973), 35.

²³ Daniel Horn, *Youth Resistance in the Third Reich*, 35.

²⁴ Detlev J. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany*, 155.

The contempt for the Hitler Youth increased due to their assumption that all German children have access to holidays; however, those in the Edelweiss Pirates were predominantly working-class and could not afford holidays. These leaflets were only the beginning, as music was another attempt to break the morale of Hitler Youth.

The Edelweiss Pirates also created anti-Nazi-themed music composed by Jewish musicians as well as their own music. In an effort to weaken the morale of Hitler Youth by creating their own parodied versions of Hitler Youth songs:

“Hey! Where the knives shine on sheaths, and the Hitlerjugend flees, the Navajos don’t blink an eye, what does this life of Hitler’s provide we want gangs of a secret kind.”²⁵

Music was a critical part of the Edelweiss Pirates’ way of promoting their anti-Nazi messages to the public. Traditional hiking songs were popular and were sung by the Edelweiss, words were altered to include Edelweiss Pirate messages and protest. The Hitler Youth responded to these parodied songs by banning lyrics, which only incited the Edelweiss pirates to make more.²⁶ The Pirate’s songs included threatening messages toward the Hitler Youth and Gestapo:

“Hitler’s power may lay us low, and keep us locked in chains, but we will smash the chains one day, we’ll be free again. We got fists and we can fight; we’ve got knives and we’ll get them out.... There’re some Hitler Youth patrolmen, and they’re getting black as pitch.... We’re Edelweiss Pirates, and we’re on our way.... Get out your cudgels and come into town. And smash in the skulls of the bosses in brown.”²⁷

The pirates also listened to banned radio stations, such as the British Broadcasting Channel.²⁸ The Edelweiss pirates continued to travel despite a ban; they went hiking and visited other Edelweiss pirate

²⁵ Sasha Durakov, “*Songs of the Edelweiss Pirates and other German Youth Gangs*” (The Underbelli, 2007.) <https://belliresearchinstitute.wordpress.com/2017/07/17/songs-of-the-edelweiss-pirates-and-other-german-youth-gangs/>.

²⁶ Detlev J. Peukert, “*Inside Nazi Germany*”, 157.

²⁷ Ibid, 157-158.

²⁸ Hannah Cleaver, Emma Gatten, Tony Diver, Helen Cahill, Ben Gartside, and Chris Mullin. 2005. “*Teenage Rebels who fought Nazis are Honored at Last.*” (The Telegraph, 2005) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/1492771/Teenage-rebels-who-fought-Nazis-are-honoured-at-last.html>.

member in bars, parks, cafes, and street corners.²⁹ According to Walter Meyer, a member of the Edelweiss Pirates at age sixteen, the Edelweiss Pirates would discuss their future plans to confuse the Hitler Youth:

“What are we going to do next?” and one would say, ‘You know the Hitler Youths? They store their equipment at such-and-such a place. Let’s make it disappear.’ ‘Okay, when are we going to meet?’ ‘Such-and-such a time. And that is what we did...you know we started by deflating the tires. Then we made the whole bicycle disappear, so it came to the point where [there were] too many complaints.”³⁰

The Edelweiss’ mission to disrupt grew into violence as they began to physically fight the Hitler Youth and the Gestapo. By 1942, the Pirates attacked Hitler Youth who were on patrols, and gained control over some areas and disrupting Hitler Youth.³¹ If the Hitler Youth entered the Edelweiss Pirates’ territories they were viciously attacked with fists, knives, and guns. In addition to violence, the Edelweiss Pirates would steal Hitler Youth badges, medals, and weapons.³² In Duisburg, the Edelweiss Pirates attacked the leaders of the Hitler Youth with brass knuckles, which not only physically threatened the Hitler Youth, but pushed some Hitler Youth members to leave the program entirely. According to an Oberhausen mining instructor, “every child knows who the KP [Kittelbach Pirates] are. They are everywhere; there are more of them than there are Hitler Youth.”³³ Despite their small size, the group was able to make an impact on German youth and in their own communities.

The Edelweiss Pirates during the final years of WWII, escalated their methods of resistance to include more violent attacks on the Nazi Party. The Edelweiss Pirates plans included assassination and bombing. In November 1944, the Köln/Cologne ‘Navajo’ Edelweiss Pirates’ leader Jean Jüelich’s/Karl

²⁹ Katie Kellerman, “*The Edelweiss Pirates: A Story of Freedom, Love, and Life*”

³⁰ Walter Meyer, “*German Resistance to Hitler – Personal History*,” (The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/oral-history/walter-meyer-describes-activities-of-members-of-the-edelweiss-pirates-in-duesseldorf-germany>

³¹ Wolfi Landstrecicher, “*Eternal War on the Hitler Youth*”, 7-8.

³² Detlev J. Peukert, “*Inside Nazi Germany*:”160.

³³ *Ibid.*, 155.

Ripke, a concentration camp escapee “Bomber” Hans Steinbrück, and others planned to blow-up the Cologne Gestapo headquarters and to assassinate the Chief of the Cologne Gestapo. In preparation for the attack, the Pirates conducted raids on ammunition, food, and supplies. When the Pirates’ hideout was discovered their weapons, money, food was confiscated. In addition, the Gestapo captured two hidden Jewish women, who were under the protection of the Pirates.

Fortunately, the Edelweiss Pirates managed to escape with the help of a friend, Cilly Serve. Cilly Serve was the owner of the home in which the Edelweiss Pirates hideout was stationed. In order to provoke the Edelweiss Pirates, the Gestapo were captured Ms. Serve and her children.³⁴ Within the same month, a battle between the Edelweiss Pirates, Gestapo, SS, and Hitler Youth occurred in Cologne. During the battle, the Edelweiss Pirates murdered the Chief of the Cologne Gestapo.

Unfortunately, due to their small numbers the battle was lost for the Edelweiss Pirates. On November 10th 1944, the Gestapo arrested and publicly hanged thirteen members of the Navajo Cologne Edelweiss Pirates, and their allies, on the Ehrenfeld railway bridge in the Hüttenstraße in Köln-Ehrenfeld.³⁵ Overall, thousands of pirates were captured and sent to concentration camps or publicly executed.³⁶ Those who were fortunate to survive were punished by the Gestapo by being placed in detention camps, labor camps, reform school, or having their heads shaved.³⁷

Despite the arrest and execution of the Cologne pirates, the Edelweiss Pirates groups which remained continued to resist authority and provided support for those who deserted the military or escaped concentration camps.³⁸ The Edelweiss Pirate members hid their Jewish neighbors, friends, and others in their homes or helped in a myriad of ways, which saved lives.³⁹ The Edelweiss Pirates were

³⁴ Von Glasow, Niko. “*Edelweiss Pirates*.” Germany: Palladio Film, 2005.

³⁵ Detlev J. Peukert, “*Inside Nazi Germany*”, 706.

³⁶ Wolfi Landstrecicher, “*Eternal War on the Hitler Youth*”, 8.

³⁷ Peukert, 161.

³⁸ Walter Meyer, “*German Resistance to Hitler – Personal History*,”

³⁹ Walter Z. Laqueur, “*Young Germany*”. (New York: Basic Books, 1962), 214.

in no way a major threat to the Gestapo; however, the pirates made the Gestapo and Hitler Youth's lives as difficult as they could. The Pirates would sabotage Nazi's cars, by pouring sugar into the gas tank, and raid ammunition buildings.⁴⁰ Due their small numbers, their resistance efforts were not, fully, recognized by the Allied Powers. Allied powers, during the occupation and defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945, only gained a brief introduction to the Edelweiss Pirates through the statements of German POWs.

The Gestapo's characterization of the Edelweiss Pirates as criminals was further supported through the Edelweiss' communist inspirations. According to the British control commission, communist and catholic political inspiration was due to the social and economic status of the Edelweiss Pirates. Edelweiss Pirates, who were captured in Italy, claimed they were not associated or identified as communist, "except [to say] that is anti-nazi and anything that is anti-nazi must be good."⁴¹ British interrogations of POW Edelweiss Pirates suggested that some Pirates acted as planted agents for the pro-Soviet *Freies Deutschland* organization.⁴² The Allied Powers, other than claims of communist inspirations, claimed that the Edelweiss Pirates' anti-authority motivations would lead to anti-Allied resistance to emerge. The image the Gestapo created for the Edelweiss Pirates, as violent criminal delinquents, remained for another sixty years after the war ended.⁴³

Fortunately, in 2005, Gertrud 'Mucki' Koch and Jean Juelich, two of the remaining five Cologne 'Navajo' Pirates, were interviewed by United Kingdom's *Telegraph Newspaper* in London. Juergen Roters, the chief administrator of Cologne, officially recognized the Edelweiss Pirates as resistance fighters.⁴⁴ A plaque and a memorial mural to the Cologne Edelweiss Pirates, at the Ehrenfeld railway bridge, honors their sacrifice and resistance to Nazism. The Edelweiss Pirates like

⁴⁰ Katie Kellerman, *The Edelweiss Pirates: A Story of Freedom, Love, and Life*.

⁴¹ Perry Biddiscombe. "The Enemy of Our Enemy", 41.

⁴² Ibid, 45.

⁴³ Hannah Cleaver, et.al. "Teenage Rebels who fought Nazis are Honored at Last."

⁴⁴ Ibid

other resistance groups in Germany, was small and unsuccessful in their fight to dismantle the Nazi Regime itself. The true achievement of the Edelweiss Pirates is their legacy of youth resistance. The Edelweiss Pirates' resistance efforts are a critical part of history as it represents the determination of youth in their pursuit of freedom and the destruction of tyranny.

Chapter 2: White Rose

As the Third Reich continued to commit acts of genocide into the 1940s, resistance groups emerged to dismantle the Nazi Regime and hold them accountable. Within the University of Munich, some college students and professors united to oppose the Third Reich and expose its crimes against humanity. The White Rose, which was a student-led resistance group, utilized literature to combat Nazi propaganda. Even though the White Rose failed to prevent the Third Reich, it represents the courage of youth who stand up against tyranny. While the White Rose suffered a tragic end, their courage to resist corruption, tyranny, and crimes against humanity remains symbolic of strength of youth.

The White Rose was a small pacifist organization which battled Nazi propaganda through the creation and distribution of leaflets. The leaflets spoke against the leaders and tyrannical crimes of the Regime. The White Rose produced from March 1942 to July 1942, and in total seven leaflets were written; however, only six were distributed. As the leaflets were created, they were copied and spread across Germany. Each of the seven leaflets denounced the Nazi Regime's corruption, oppression of Germans, and the genocide of Jews. The leaflets included quotes from philosophers and writers such as Lao-Tzu, Aristotle, Friedrich Schiller, and a few bible verses.⁴⁵ The leaflets began with recollections of Germany's past away from National Socialism and urged Germans to recognize the atrocities which occurred in their own country.⁴⁶ The White Rose recognized that they themselves could not overthrow the Regime, but they simply asked for Germany question their government and its actions. The beliefs of the White Rose are clearly stated in the first leaflet,

“Nothing is less worthy of a civilized people than to let themselves be governed- without resistance – by an irresponsible and base clique. Is not every honest German today ashamed of his government? And who among us can guess the dimensions of the shame that will engulf us

⁴⁵ Inge Scholl, Translated by Arthur R. Schultz, “*Students Against Tyranny; The Resistance of the White Rose, Munich, 1942-193.*” (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1970), 73-91.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 73-76.

and our children, when the veil falls from our eyes one day and the most gruesome and immeasurable crimes come to light?”⁴⁷

As the leaflets were released, they became more urgent as WWII claimed more lives both domestically and abroad. In leaflet four, the White Rose directly spoke to Germans stating,

“But out of love for coming generations we must make an example after the conclusion of the war, so that no one will ever again have the slightest urge to try a similar action. And do not forget the petty scoundrels in this regime; note their names, so that no one will go free! They should not find it possible, having had part in these abominable crimes, at the last minute to rally to another flag and then act as if nothing had happened! ... We will not be silent. We are your bad conscience. The White Rose will not leave you in peace!”⁴⁸

The leaflets were called the “Leaflets of the White Rose” and were created using a typewriter and reprinted using a hand-operated copy machine, or mimeograph. Leaflets were sent to various addresses, either picked at random or possible sympathizers.⁴⁹ Alex Schmorell purchased the typewriter, mimeograph, stencils, and paper with his allowance money.⁵⁰ The leaflets were brought to other areas in Germany by train, which was constantly searched by the Gestapo. Girls frequently transported leaflets as they were less likely to be searched by Gestapo.⁵¹ Leaflets were also left in high-traffic locations such as Universities, town centers, and even telephone boxes.⁵² Recipients were told “Please make as many copied of this leaflet as you can and distribute them.”⁵³ As the leaflets spread, foreign countries apart of the Allied Powers assisted in spreading the anti-nazi messages. The sixth leaflet *Fellow! Fellow Students! (Or Last Leaflet)* were transported to England where they were copied and airdropped over Germany.⁵⁴ The messages were pacifist in nature and contained directions on protest methods. In the third leaflet, the White Rose states,

⁴⁷ Inge Scholl, “*The White Rose*”, 88.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 88.

⁴⁹ Toby Axelrod, Hans, and Sophie Scholl: *German Resisters of the White Rose*, (New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2001), 65.

¹ Ibid., 65.

⁵¹ Ibid., 69.

⁵² Inge Scholl, *Students Against Tyranny*, 12.

⁵³ Ibid., 12.

⁵⁴ Toby Axelrod, “*Hans and Sophie Scholl*,” 28.

“Sabotage in armament plants and war industries, sabotage at all gatherings, rallies, public ceremonies, and organizations of the National Socialist Party, Obstruction of the smooth functioning of the war machine (a machine for war that goes on solely to shore up and perpetuate the National Socialist Party and its dictatorship). [...] Do not give a penny to public drives...do not contribute to the collections of metals, textiles, and the like. Try to convince all your acquaintances (including those in lower social classes) of the senselessness of continuing, of the hopelessness of this war. [...] urge them to passive resistance!”

Despite the spread of the leaflets, the White Rose was still a small group organized by college students. The White Rose did not have any power or defense against the might of the Nazi Regime, so every resistance activity came with immeasurable risk. Those who were captured with resistance literature would be convicted of treason and executed. Since any form of resistance to the Regime was treasonous.⁵⁵ In order to survive resistance groups were forced to work covertly. The White Rose used their positions as students and professors to maintain cover while they wrote, printed, and spread their anti-Nazi messages.

Founded by Hans Scholl with a group of his peers, *The White Rose* originated club where students, professors, and lecturers would participate in medical, cultural, and intellectual discussions. Hans Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, and George Wittenstein, the original members, met while in compulsory army service as medics.⁵⁶ The group was enlisted into the Student Corp which allowed them to study at university and complete military service in the summer.⁵⁷ While the group of friends attended university, their views on National Socialism began to fade as they witnessed first-hand the horrors of war and beginning of the *Einsatzgruppen*, task forces. Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party began efforts to eliminate all Jews in Europe, which began the Shoah/Holocaust. Franz Mueller, a friend of

⁵⁵ Toby Axelrod, “Hans and Sophie Scholl,” 22.

⁵⁶ Richard Hanser, *A Noble Treason: The Revolt of the Munich Students Against Hitler* (Toronto: Longman Canada Limited, 1979), 24.

⁵⁷ Toby Axelrod, 38.

the Scholls and member of the White Rose, informed the White Rose of the executions of Jews through the use of gas chambers. In the second leaflet, the genocide of Jews is directly mentioned:

“No, only by way of example do we want to cite the fact that since the conquest of Poland *three hundred thousand* Jews have been murdered in this country in the most bestial way.... Why do the German people behave so apathetically in the face of all these abominable crimes, crimes so unworthy of the human race?”⁵⁸

The letters directly addressed the German population. These leaflets stated that those who stood idle while genocide was committed are burdened with the guilt of the crimes. The White Rose used these resistance efforts to inform Germans of the horrors of the Holocaust and World War II.

The White Rose group was led by its core leaders, Hans Scholl, Sophie Scholl, Christoph Probst, Willi Graf, Alexander Schmorell, George Wittenstein, and Professor Kurt Huber.⁵⁹ Hans Scholl and Alexander Schmorell were the brains of the operation. They worked together to write leaflets, organize transport, and other methods of resistance. Sophie Scholl, who joined the core group later, helped to create, print, distribute leaflets, and handle the finances of the group.⁶⁰ Of the seven core members, the most recognizable members were the Scholl siblings. Hans Scholl was born on September 22nd, 1918 (Ingersheim/Crailsheim, Baden-Wurtemberg) and Sophie was born on May 9th, 1921 (Forchtenberg, Weimar Republic).⁶¹ The siblings formed and participated in the White Rose at 25, Hans Scholl, and 22 years old, Sophie Scholl.⁶²

The Scholl family was made up of six siblings and their parents, Robert, and Magdalena Scholl. Their father participated in local politics as Mayor of both Ingersheim and Forchtenberg.⁶³ Mr. Scholl disagreed with the Nazi Regime and encouraged free thought within the family: “What I want

⁵⁸ Inge Scholl, “Student’s Against Tyranny”, 78.

⁵⁹ Inge Scholl, “Student’s Against Tyranny”, 3.

⁶⁰ Axelrod, 62.

⁶¹ Annette Dumbach and Jud Newborn, *Sophie Scholl, and the White Rose* (Oxford: Natl Book Network, 2007), 45.

⁶² Inge Scholl, 3.

⁶³ Richard Hanser, *A Noble Treason*, 45.

most of all is that you live in uprightness and freedom of spirit, no matter how difficult that proves to be.”⁶⁴ Both Sophie and Hans Scholl joined the Hitler Youth and League of German Girls, but grew to disagree and resist Nazi ideology. Hans Scholl, while in Hitler Youth, joined *Jugendbewegung* (Youth Movement) which read books that were forbidden (burned) by the Regime (ordered by Joseph Goebbels).⁶⁵ After Hans was briefly arrested for his participation in the *Jugendbewegung*, Hans was placed into compulsory military service, where he served as a medic and saw the physical horrors up close. There he witnessed the horrors of war and genocide caused by the Third Reich, which repulsed him: “Can anything be more ridiculous than that a man should have the right to kill me because he lives on the other side of the water, and because his ruler has a quarrel with mine, though I have none with him?”⁶⁶ Hans’ experiences as a German Army Medic gave him first-hand knowledge of the crimes committed by the Nazi Regime. His motivations for enacting change resonated with his peers, and eventually with his family who also shared anti-nazi views.

Sophie Scholl, who was four years younger, was a member of the League of German Girls. Sophie enthusiastically participated in the L.G.G., as she believed in the Nazis’ mission for a better Germany. The illusion of the L.G.G. began to disappear when she, like her brother, began to question the world around her. When she was twelve, Sophie asked her sister Inge why her Jewish friend could not join BDW: “Why isn’t Luise Nathan allowed to be a BDM member, with her blonde hair and blue eyes, but I am, with my dark hair and eyes?”⁶⁷ Sophie’s enthusiasm for the group began to falter as she noticed her Jewish friends were not allowed to join L.G.G.⁶⁸ This opened Sophie’s eyes to the discrimination of Jewish people.

⁶⁴ Inge Scholl, *Students Against Tyranny*, 12.

⁶⁵ Dumbach and Newborn, *Sophie Scholl*, 43.

⁶⁶ Richard Hanser, *A Noble Treason*, 97.

⁶⁷ Dumbach and Newborn, *Sophie Scholl*, 37.

⁶⁸ Toby Axelrod, *Hans, and Sophie Scholl*, 36-37.

Sophie's impression of the Nazi Regime was forever altered after the arrest of her brother and her father. Robert Scholl was sent to prison for calling Hitler, "God's Scourge", while her brother was arrested for participating in the *Jugendbewegung*, German Youth Movement.⁶⁹ Hans Scholl joined a secret group of boys who participated in camping trips where they would read banned literature.⁷⁰ As her family was imprisoned for speaking out against the regime, Sophie began to rebel against Nazism. Sophie's Lutheran faith was dedicated to the understanding of dignity for all living beings which only reinforced her opposition to Nazi ideology. Similar to her brother Hans, Sophie would participate in forbidden/banned activities which were viewed as 'degenerate' by the Regime.⁷¹ Sophie also recommended her peers read Heinrich Heine, a Jewish poet, which was not received well the rest of the L.G.G.⁷² The Scholl Siblings were raised in a household which was not antisemitic and did not support Nazism.

At the University of Munich, as a philosophy and biology student, Sophie found leaflets of *Leaves of the White Rose*, *Flugblätter of the Weisse Rose*. When Sophie read the leaflets, she secretly rejoiced at the message.⁷³ Since anti-nazi speech was encouraged at the Scholl home, she recognized the writings and confronted her brother.⁷⁴ Sophie, who shared the same views as her brother, convinced him to allow her to join:

"But, Hans, a man can't do a thing like this alone. The fact that nowadays only one person can be allowed to be in on a thing like this - surely proves how irresistible this power is that can corrode the closest human ties and isolate us. By yourself you are powerless against them."⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Inge Scholl, *Students Against Tyranny*, 13, 25.

⁷⁰ Toby Axelrod, 36.

⁷¹ Tanja B. Spitzer and the National World War II Museum, "*Sophie Scholl and the White Rose*." (N.p. National World War II Museum), <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/sophie-scholl-and-white-rose>

⁷² Erin Harper and Dr. Rebecca Dupas, *Bad Conscience-Podcast (Transcript)*, (N.p. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum), <https://www.ushmm.org/learn/podcasts-and-audio/12-years-that-shook-the-world/bad-conscience> .

⁷³ Inge Scholl, "*Student's Against Tyranny*," 31.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 32

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

After Sophie joined the White Rose, she and the other members worked together to secretly spread the group's message of anti-Nazism.⁷⁶

The White Rose movement influenced other to join the resistance. A female student, Traute Lafrenz, transported messages to Hamburg 490 miles/789 km while another medical student, began the "Hamburg Branch of the White Rose".⁷⁷ White Rose members and followers painted slogans on university buildings such as "Down with Hitler" and "Freedom".⁷⁸ Despite the threat of violence from the Gestapo, the White Rose remained a non-violent/pacifist group. The leaflets encouraged its readers to sabotage the 'war machine' of the National Socialist Part.

On February 18th, 1943, Sophie and Hans Scholl began distributing leaflets around their campus before lectures were dismissed. Sophie threw leaflets off the top of a stairwell above the entrance hall, which caught the attention of the building's superintendent.⁷⁹ The pair were immediately locked in the stairwell and reported to the Gestapo. Sophie and Hans were arrested, and their associates were captured as well. While in jail, Sophie and Hans were brutally interrogated for four days by the Gestapo. Hans and Sophie were placed in separate prison cells and were under constant surveillance to prevent attempted suicide. But they remained strong during interrogation and refused to release any information about the White Rose. The siblings' bravery throughout the sentencing, interrogation, and execution impressed fellow prisoners as well as guards, as "they bore themselves with marvelous bravery. The whole prison was impressed by them."⁸⁰ The siblings remained calm throughout their ordeal, up until their execution.⁸¹ Sophie, according to her lawyer, even asked if she had the right to be executed by firing squad and later asked whether she was to be hung or guillotined. Hans, despite his

⁷⁶ Tanja B. Spitzer, and the National World War II Museum, "*Sophie Scholl and the White Rose.*"

⁷⁷ Inge Scholl, "*Students Against Tyranny,*" 50, 68-69.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Inge Scholl, *Students Against Tyranny*, 83.

⁸⁰ Ibid.,62.

⁸¹ Ibid., 53.

impending execution, did his best to portray himself as calm and cheerful to reassure his family.⁸² On February 22nd, 1943, the Scholl Siblings and Christopher Probst were executed by guillotine.

After the deaths of the Scholl siblings, the remaining White Rose members were executed, imprisoned, or sent to concentration camps. Alexander Schmorell, Willi Graf, and Professor Kurt Huber were convicted and sentenced on April 19th 1943. Schmorell and Huber were executed on July 13th, 1944, and Willi Graf was executed on October 12th, 1944.⁸³ The deaths of the White Rose were publicized by the Regime, to threaten other resistance groups to dismantle.⁸⁴ Regardless of the Gestapo's posters, resistance efforts inspired by the White Rose continued the mission. A resistance group in Hamburg emerged but was quickly discovered by the Gestapo. This led to the deaths of eight individuals through execution and forced suicide. Thirty members were captured and imprisoned, fortunately, many were released after the war by allied forces.⁸⁵ Despite the downfall of the White Rose and those who followed their path, the movement was critical to representing the fight for integrity regardless of the threats from the Regime.

The noble movement of the White Rose is critical to the history of Nazi Resistance, as it represents the efforts of young adults and intellectuals across Germany. The University of Munich both provided a center for learning and but also a site of resistance. Students showed courage by questioning the very system they lived under. The ideas that were spread in the *Leaves of the White Rose* helped to inform Germans and allow them to make their own assumptions about the regime. Even though the White Rose failed to prevent the Third Reich, it represents the courage of youth who stand up against tyranny.

⁸² Inge Scholl, "Students Against Tyranny," 55.

⁸³ Aly Passanante and Global Nonviolent Action Database, "Student Against Tyranny; The White Rose, Munich, 1942-1943"

⁸⁴ Annette Dumbach, Jud Newborn, "Sophie Scholl", 184.

⁸⁵ Inge Scholl, *Students Against Tyranny*, 68-72.

Chapter 3: Red Orchestra

The Red Orchestra was a small network of anti-Nazi resistance groups which spanned across Germany and Europe. The Red Orchestra was made up of three main groups: Trepper Group, Schulze-Boysen Harnack, and the Red Three. The groups worked independently but were all identified under the title of 'Red Orchestra' from the Gestapo, Nazi Secret Police, records. The groups were connected through their associations with communism and the USSR. The Red Orchestra was not a large organization; however, their small membership included various economic, ethnic, and political backgrounds. During World War II, the Red Orchestra played a crucial role in dismantling and prosecuting the Third Reich as it provided intelligence to the Allied Powers and USSR.

The Red Orchestra's network of resistance groups provided intelligence to the Allied Powers and USSR through espionage. The mission of the Red Orchestra's groups all unified through their opposition to National Socialism and the Third Reich. The three groups associated under the Red Orchestra based their resistance off of either communist or socialist political ideals.⁸⁶ One group, Schulze-Boysen and Harnack group, formed their circles well before 1933 and later evolved into resistance.⁸⁷ A majority of Red Orchestra members were not trained or participated in espionage, as some of the groups began as discussion or social circles. During the 1940s, these resistance circles began to overlap with each other which allowed for increased resistance activities. The Red Orchestra's network included more than 150 members in Germany. These groups included a variety of people from different religions, nationalities, and political positions.⁸⁸ The Red Orchestra, regardless of its small size, was able to gather and share information on the Third Reich to Allied Powers and the USSR.

⁸⁶ Wolfgang Benz, and Walter H. Pehle, eds. *Encyclopedia of German Resistance to the Nazi Movement.* (New York: Continuum, 1997), 223.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Wolfgang Benz, *Encyclopedia of German Resistance to the Nazi Movement,* 226.

The Trepper Group was among the first members of the Soviet Secret Service and the Red Orchestra. Leopold Trepper was born in Nowy Targ, Poland in 1904. Trepper was raised Jewish and lived in Poland until his early twenties. In 1926, Trepper became active in the illegal Polish Communist Party. Trepper eventually was forced to move to France where he joined the French Communist Party and began his work in the Soviet Service. After the French discovered his involvement, he was deported to the Soviet Union. In Moscow, Trepper trained for intelligence work at Communist University for Western Workers, KUNZ.⁸⁹ Trepper, prior to World War II, was assigned to Brussel's to supply the USSR with information while utilizing a spy network and radio operators. Under the direction of the USSR's General Berzin, Trepper was instructed to construct a spy network before WWII broke out. According to Trepper's memoir, *The Great Game: Memoirs of the Spy Hitler Couldn't Silence*, General Berzin ordered,

“You have approximately two years before the war breaks out,’ he told me. ‘Take every precaution to see that your network remains dormant until the beginning of the war.... The defeat of Nazism is our sole objective.”⁹⁰

Trepper began to work as an undercover agent in Belgium and France for the Soviet Military Intelligence. In order to maintain and establish the spy network's cover, the USSR provided the Trepper group with some funding, personnel, and equipment. Since the USSR already had agents placed in other countries, the Trepper group worked independently with minimal support.⁹¹ The USSR granted Trepper \$10,000 to launch their resistance efforts. In 1938, Trepper purchased and began the *Foreign Excellent Trench Coat Company*. The business grew and helped to establish a larger spy network. Other trench coat companies were brought into Italy, France, Holland, parts of Scandinavia, and Japan.⁹² A similar business was created in Brussels called “*Le Roi du Caoutchouc*”, the Raincoat

⁸⁹ Jewish Virtual Library, “Leopold Trepper” (Jewish Virtual Library, 2008) <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org>

⁹⁰ Leopold Trepper, “*The Great Game: Memoirs of the Spy Hitler Couldn't Silence*” (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977), 90.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Leopold Trepper, “*The Great Game:*,” 97-98.

King.⁹³ The branches worked together to gather information on material exports and imports to Germany, as well as information about military transports and movements.⁹⁴ As well as providing a cover for network activity, the business' profits were financing the organizations resistance activity.⁹⁵ Suspicion was successfully averted, and the underground resistance was able to gather the much-needed information requested by the Soviet Military Intelligence.

As the Trepper group expanded their network, different methods were utilized to send information to the USSR. Direct contact with the USSR was established through covert couriers, radio transmissions, and letters which were sent through Switzerland. Leopold Trepper's memoir, states directives and transmissions were sent using coded messages relating to the cover business,

“The Center was asking me to create a ‘shoe factory.’ In the jargon of intelligence, ‘shoes’ refers to false identity papers and, logically enough, a forger of such papers is known as a ‘shoemaker.’...It leaves clues; sooner or later, a ‘re-soled’ passport falls into the hands of the police. Above all, I was afraid that shoemaking would draw attention to my Belgian counterespionage group.”⁹⁶

Other than USSR directives, coded information contained valuable information on troop deployments, availability of raw materials, and military ammunition/machinery production. The cover established a safety net for espionage activity and allowed the Trepper group to gain access to financially elite German social circles.⁹⁷ Branches of the *Foreign Excellent Trench Coat Company* threw dinner parties to gather military intel from other elite businessmen and those with connections to German military commanders. As the Trepper group established the Red Orchestra's espionage network, other resistance groups were brought into the fold.

⁹³ Gilles Perrault, “*Red Orchestra*” (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 23.

⁹⁴ Trepper, “The Great Game:,” 97.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 97.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 105.

⁹⁷ Gilles Perrault, “*Red Orchestra*,” 23.

In 1936, the Red Three Stations, *Die Roten Drei Sender*, or the western name 'Lucy Ring', began their own spy network in neutral Switzerland.⁹⁸ The group was led by Alexander Radó, alias DORA, a Hungarian émigré, and subgroup leaders: Rachel Dübendorfer alias Sissy, Otto Pünter alias PAKBO, and Georges Blun alias LONG. Radó established the Red Three in coordination with the USSR's Soviet Military Intelligence. Radó's communist political beliefs initiated his working relationship with the USSR, as an intelligence agent of the GRU, Main Intelligence Directorate. Radó's interest in communism began after his escape to Vienna, Austria from Hungary in 1899, after the 'White Terror' Communist Revolution. In July 1920, Radó formed a news agency, *Rosta Wien*, which spread Soviet Union propaganda broadcasts. Eventually, the Soviet military intelligence reached out to Radó and he moved into Switzerland where the resistance movement The Red Three was established.⁹⁹

While visiting Moscow, Radó was recruited by Soviet Military Intelligence and planted in Germany and Italy as an intelligence agent (GRU or Main Intelligence Directorate) agent. Stationed in Switzerland during 1936, Radó and the Red Three established a cover business, to continue radio and news broadcasts. In Geneva, the Red Three purchased and began the GeoPress Agency. The GeoPress, or *Pressegeographie*, was the world's first press agency for maps and geographical diagrams.¹⁰⁰ Due to Radó's geographical knowledge and achievements from the University of Austria, the cover business was able to successfully exist. The business supplied newspapers, maps, and journals throughout Western Europe.¹⁰¹ The cover gained accreditation to the League of Nations Press Office, this allowed for the Red Three to gain elite/high-ranking contacts. Radó, under the cover of the GeoPress, orchestrated a group of communist agents. Coded messages and reports of German activity were concealed using maps.

⁹⁸ Trepper, "*The Great Game*:" 255-256.

⁹⁹ V.E. Tarrant, "*The Red Orchestra*" (Wiley-Blackwell Publishers, 1995), 147-149.

¹⁰⁰ V.E. Tarrant, "*The Red Orchestra*," 150-151.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 151

In March 1942, the Red Three was able to send critical intelligence to Moscow regarding the German's military plans. The German military planned to occupy the Caucasian Oilfields, Operation Blue. If the mission were successful for the Germans, this would deprive the USSR of oil completely. George Blun, alias LONG, received this information through General Adolf Hamann, German OKW. The coded message included top-secret statistics about German tanks, aircraft, and their death toll.¹⁰² In November 1942, intelligence regarding the German's invasion of Stalingrad was transmitted to the USSR by the Red Three. The USSR was able to prepare for the inevitable German attack. Stalingrad, current day Volgograd, was supplied with a million men, 1,560 tanks, 16,262 guns, and 1,327 aircraft. In temperatures as low as -35°C/-31°F, the German army of 269,000 was defeated within two days, officially ending on February 2nd, 1943.¹⁰³ As well as communist led Resistance, the Red Orchestra included domestic resistance within Nazi Germany.

The German-led branch of the Red Orchestra started in 1933 in Berlin with, spouses' team, Arvid Harnack and Mildred Fish-Harnack. The group gathered military intelligence, proof of the Reich's crimes, and distributed anti-Hitler literature.¹⁰⁴ Arvid Harnack was born in Darmstadt, Germany and worked in the Reich's Ministry of Economics.¹⁰⁵ After WWI, Arvid Harnack joined the *Freikorps*, a nationalistic paramilitary group for unemployed veterans and young Germans. The group was violently anti-communist organization. Harnack did not agree with the violence of the *Freikorps* and left to pursue an academic career in legal studies. Mildred Fish-Harnack was born in Milwaukee Wisconsin in 1902 and she attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin where she met her husband, Arvid. Mildred received her PhD in German studies while in Germany in 1929 (after her marriage to Arvid) while Arvid was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy at Giessen University.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² V.E. Tarrant, "*The Red Orchestra*," 33.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 150-151.

¹⁰⁴ Jewish Virtual Library, "*The Red Orchestra*"

¹⁰⁵ Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, "*The German Resistance Memorial*"

¹⁰⁶ Tarrant V.E. "*The Red Orchestra*," 70.

In 1932, the couple created a study circle which shared ideas to analyze the political, social, and economic repercussions of National Socialism in Germany. The group initially was aimed to study the Soviet planned economy, but with the rise of National Socialism the motivations changed. Arvid Harnack and Professor Friedrich Lenz founded the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft zum Studium der Sowjetrussischen*, Society for the Study of Soviet Planned Economy or *Arplan*.¹⁰⁷ The plan of the group was to use the USSR's economic plans as a model to help rebuild Germany after the failure of National Socialism.¹⁰⁸ Arplan soon gained the attention of the Russian Embassy in Berlin and introduced Arvid, and Arplan, to the Soviet Secret Service.

Mildred, Arvid Harnack, and twenty-three members of *Arplan* were contacted by Sergei Bessonov, Soviet Embassy Counsellor, and travelled to Russia. There they were prepared for work in the Soviet Secret Service. When Arplan returned to Berlin, Arplan was quickly disbanded, and membership lists were destroyed. The president of Arplan, Professor Friedrich Lenz, was threatened by the SS for being a “perpetrator of Marxist ideas.”¹⁰⁹ Any remaining evidence of communist or communications with Soviet Union were destroyed. Arvid Harnack's book on the Soviet Union was cancelled and the printing press' plates were destroyed.¹¹⁰ On September 17th, 1940, Alexander Mikhailovich Korotkov, secret agent from the Soviet Embassy, recruited Arvid Harnack and subsequently Mildred. Secret agents for the Soviet Secret Service.¹¹¹ Arvid and Mildred created fake identities as a loyal Nazis in order to gather military, political, and statistical intel for both the Russians and the American Embassy.

¹⁰⁷ Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, “Arvid Harnack.” (Berlin-Mitte, 1996-2021) <https://www.gdw-berlin.de/home/>

¹⁰⁸ Benz, Wolfgang, “*Encyclopedia of German Resistance to the Nazi Movement.*,” 224.

¹⁰⁹ Brysac, Shareen Blair, “*Resisting Hitler: Mildred Harnack and the Red Orchestra*” (Oxford University Press, 2000), 128.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 128-129.

¹¹¹ Tarrant V.E. *The Red Orchestra*, 74.

To maintain cover, Arvid Harnack joined the Nazi Party officially on July 8th and was elected to the *Herren Klub*, translated as either Gentlemen's Club or Men's Club.¹¹² This club was made up of German elites ranging from manufacturers, aristocrats, bureaucrats, and high-ranking officials. This gave the Arplan group access to extremely sensitive information in military, political, and economic circles. Members such as Baron Wohlzogen-Neuhaus, codename Griechisch, was a senior representative of the technical department in *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* Armed Forces. The group included financial connections such as, Hans Rupp alias 'Turke' was the lead accountant of I.G. Farben Industries. Harnack's step-nephew was also enlisted, Wolfgang Havemann alias 'Italiener' a naval intelligence officer in *Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine* (Navy High Command).¹¹³ Arvid Harnack was able to gain access classified documents and share the information with America and Russia. While Arvid Harnack was gathering intel, Mildred and others would type and distribute leaflets, arrange secret meetings, and contact other resistance members.¹¹⁴ As a cover, Mildred used her position as a journalist and magazine author to frequently travel across borders and publish leaflets. The leaflets contained speeches of American leaders and political leaders, foreign news, and foreign opinions on Germany and Hitler.¹¹⁵

Mildred and Greta Kuckoff, a member of Harnack group, translated speeches from Churchill and Roosevelt, and shared information which was forbidden to the Germans. The leaflets and books were disguised as romances or innocuous books, such as home repair pamphlets or other approved Nazi literature. Mildred Harnack partnered with Greta Kuckoff to translate, into English, speeches from foreign leaders, notably Churchill and Roosevelt, and secretly add them to approved literature. Greta Kuckoff was hired to translate *Mein Kampf* into English; however, Kuckoff wrote illegal anti-

¹¹² Ibid., 69-71.

¹¹³ Tarrant V.E., "*The Red Orchestra*," 70-71.

¹¹⁴ Shareen Blair Brysac, "*Resisting Hitler: Mildred Harnack*," 30.

¹¹⁵ Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, "*Mildred Harnack*."

nazi writings in its place. The pamphlets were published by the Communist Party and distributed under a variety of false titles. One popular book title used was *Elektrowärme im Haushalt*, Home Heating by Electricity, which was used by the Harnack group to disguise and publish, *The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror and Burning of the Reichstag*.¹¹⁶ The Harnack group was supplying intelligence of the Third Reich to the United States and USSR, while they diligently worked to covertly educate the German public of the Reich's crimes. As the Harnack's efforts expanded, their network overlapped with other resistances associated with the Soviet Union.

Similar to the Harnack group, another domestic resistance was active in Germany at the same time. Harro and Libertas Schulze-Boysen formed a small discussion group in 1934 to discuss artistic, political, and philosophical ideas.¹¹⁷ The group consisted of a variety of people from different backgrounds, professions, and cultures.¹¹⁸ The group distributed flyers and posters which described the crimes of the Nazi Regime, such as, "The Nazi Paradise – War – Starvation – Lies – Gestapo. How much longer?"¹¹⁹ Harro Schulze-Boysen was viewed as a fanatic by the Gestapo, Harro took big risks when distributing literature and pasting posters, which lead to members to be hesitant to participate. Harro Schulze-Boysen would respond to this by threateningly waving a loaded service revolver at them.¹²⁰

Libertas Haas-Heye, born in Germany, worked as a publicist in the Berlin office of MGM Film Studios. She became a member of the Nazi Party prior to her involvement with the resistance, as she left Nazi Party in 1937.¹²¹ Harro Schulze-Boysen, codename Choro or Starshina, was a left-wing German publicist and Air Force, *Luftwaffe*, officer. Harro Schulze's reputation among the Regime was

¹¹⁶ Brysac, 199.

¹¹⁷ Shareen Blair Brysac, "*Resisting Hitler: Mildred Harnack*," 236.

¹¹⁸ Wolfgang Benz, "*Encyclopedia of German Resistance to the Nazi Movement*," 224.

¹¹⁹ V.E. Tarrant, "*The Red Orchestra*," 74.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, "*Libertas Schulze-Boysen*."

already established through his family members. His father was a decorated naval officer, Erich Edgar Schulze, and his uncle, Alfred von Tirpitz, was the Grand Admiral of *Jungdeutscher Orden*, German Youth Order.¹²² Harro and Libertas Schulze-Boysen's connections to Nazism allowed for their organization to operate without suspicion.

As members of the elite in Germany, the Schulze-Boysen maintained their cover through sponsored, 'fourteen-points' parties. These parties were surprise events in which women would wear little to no clothing. The purpose of these parties was to quickly add members while participating in sexual activities.¹²³ According to Ernst von Salomon, "It's true that he [Harro] and Lib allowed each other complete sexual freedom, but what's so extraordinary about that? They were just keeping up the bohemian style of living [...]"¹²⁴ According to the account of an un-named Veteran of the Abwehr and Gestapo, together Mildred Harnack and Libertas Schulze-Boysen seduced and had sexual relations with Lieutenant Gollnow. This interaction motivated Lieutenant Gollnow into joining the Red Orchestra as well as revealing confidential military secrets,

"As soon as the others learned that Gollnow was pliable, things happened very fast. In other words, Mildred slept with him. So did Libertas, Schulze-Boysen's wife. [...] They had no difficulty in turning his head completely and making him forget his most rudimentary loyalties[...]"¹²⁵

The Schulze-Boysen and the Harnack group partnered up on multiple occasions and eventually formed the Schulze-Boysen, Harnack group or Center. The groups would maintain their secrecy by camouflaging their espionage activities as sexual encounters. Arvid and Mildred Harnack were a part of the resistance but were more socially conservative than others. Arvid Harnack did not participate in any sexual espionage but was viewed as the brains of the operation. Harro Schulze-Boysen's impulsive

¹²² Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, "*Harro Schulze-Boysen*."

¹²³ Gilles Perrault, "*Red Orchestra*," 209-210.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 209.

and ambitious nature allowed him to become the leader of the Berlin network.¹²⁶ These groups worked together, not to simply establish a communist network, but to reclaim Germany from the Third Reich.

Despite the efforts of the Red Orchestra, the Gestapo caught up to their espionage activity and dismantled the spy network. From August 31st, 1942, to March 1943, 126 members were arrested. Five members committed suicide, five were killed without a trial, and ninety-one were brought to trial. Forty-eight members were executed in Plötzensee, Tegel, Halle, and Brandenburg in 1942-1943.¹²⁷ The Gestapo investigated and captured the Trepper and Schulze-Boysen/Harnack groups during September and October of 1942.¹²⁸ The Red Three members were arrested in Switzerland, as their resistance efforts violated Swiss neutrality. The Trepper group was shut down and Trepper was captured by the Gestapo. The Gestapo forced Trepper to perform a *funkspiel*, or Radio Game, a counterintelligence method used to manipulate a foreign spy into sending false information to their spy base of operations.¹²⁹ Trepper continued to send secret coded messages within the German *funkspiel*, as the messages were coded in a mixture of Yiddish, Polish, and Hebrew.¹³⁰ After the liberation of Germany, Trepper was eventually released and returned to Moscow. Trepper was arrested in Moscow, for being and associating with Jews, for ten years. After his release, he and his family moved to Israel where he lived the rest of his life.

The Schulze-Boysen/Harnack groups were captured and imprisoned by the Gestapo; however, they did not have the same fate as the Trepper and Red Three groups. The Gestapo found radio transmissions which contained the addresses of the Schulze-Boysen Harnack group leaders. In October 1943, more than one hundred and thirty persons were arrested, twenty-five of which being the Schulze-

¹²⁶ Gilles Perrault, "Red Orchestra," 211-212.

¹²⁷ Wolfgang Benz "Encyclopedia of German Resistance to the Nazi Movement.," 226.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 23.

¹²⁹ Jewish Virtual Library, "Leopold Trepper." (2008) <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org>

¹³⁰ Ibid.

Boysen/Harnack group.¹³¹ The leaders of each group were relentlessly interrogated, tortured, and executed. In total, 217 agents of the Red Orchestra were arrested and 143 were executed, murdered, or committed suicide, there were only seventy-four survivors.¹³² Mildred Fish-Harnack was the only American woman to be executed under the direct order of Hitler. Their trial was led by prosecutor Manfred Roedor or ‘Hitler’s Bloodhound’ and the defense for the Schulze-Boysen/Harnack groups was ill-prepared. The first trial was completed and initially the groups were given jail time; however, at Hitler’s command, the prison sentences were replaced with death sentences.¹³³ Eleven members were executed at Plötzensee, which including Arvid and Harro by hanging. Mildred and Libertas were executed by guillotine.

The Red Orchestra, or Rote Kapelle, was one of the most notable and vast resistance networks known during the World War II era. The many groups under the umbrella of Red Orchestra provided a large and expansive network that was able to spread information on the crimes of the Nazi Regime. The Trepper group, The Red Three, and the Schulze-Boysen and Harnack groups, each hailing from different lands and creeds, were all united through their mission to dismantle the Nazi Regime. The bravery of the Red Orchestra continues to have an everlasting impact on the world due to the sacrifices of its members and the many lives that were saved.

¹³¹ Leopold Trepper, *The Great Game:* 160-162.

¹³² Tarrant V.E., *The Red Orchestra,* 199.

¹³³ Shareen Blair Brysac, *Resisting Hitler: Mildred Harnack,* 350-352.

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