

The english travelling exhibition
“The White Rose. The Student Resistance
against Hitler, Munich 1942/43”
is available for display.

The White Rose

Information about the
White Rose resistance group

White Rose Foundation, Munich

Imprint

Text and conception

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In 1942/43 several students and a professor of philosophy at Munich's Ludwig-Maximilians-University called for resistance against the Nazi dictatorship by issuing several leaflets. Motivated by Christian-humanistic beliefs they protested against war, oppression and the National Socialists' crimes. In their leaflets they warned, that everyone not actively engaging in the liberation of the Germans from Nazi dictatorship, is equally guilty.

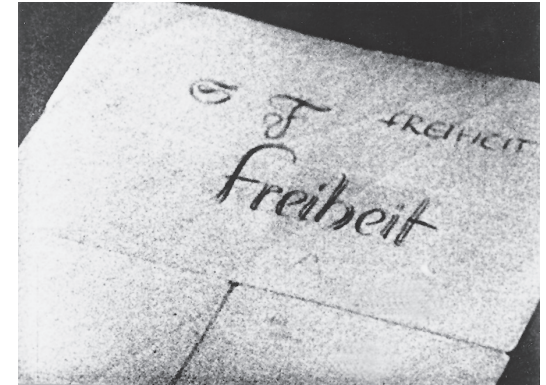
In the summer of 1942 the medical students Hans Scholl and Alexander Schmorell distributed the first four 'leaflets of the White Rose' in Munich. In the second leaflet they denounced the murder of the Jewish population in Poland: "Here we are witnessing the most terrible crime against human dignity, a crime unprecedented in all history of mankind." They were stunned by the 'apathy' of the Germans. In the fourth leaflet they threatened: "We will not be silent, we are your guilty conscience, the White Rose will not leave you any peace!"

The fifth leaflet 'Call to all Germans!' published in January of 1943 was – now with the support of Sophie Scholl, Willi Graf and other allies – distributed in many German and Austrian cities. The resistance group's political agenda called for "freedom of speech, freedom of religion, protection of each individual citizen against the despotism of violent regimes as foundation of a new Europe". During nights Hans Scholl together with Alexander Schmorell and Willi Graf wrote claims like 'Hitler Mass Murderer' or 'Freedom' on public buildings in Munich, using tar paint.

In early February of 1943 Prof. Kurt Huber wrote the sixth leaflet, an appeal to all students to oppose the murderous government. It was distributed inside Ludwig-Maximilians-University's main building on February 18th by Hans and Sophie Scholl. Caught in action by the janitor they were handed over to Gestapo. Furthermore a handwritten leaflet draft, which was found, led to the arrest of the medical student Christoph Probst. As early as February 22nd 1943 all three students were sentenced to death and murdered by guillotine at the Munich-Stadelheim prison.

A series of police investigations with severe consequences followed: by fall of 1943 Alexander

"Freedom", written by Sophie Scholl on the back of her indictment paper.



Schmorell, Willi Graf and Prof. Kurt Huber were sentenced to death and executed. Yet another death sentence was issued for the student of chemistry Hans Leipelt, who was killed on January 30th 1945; he had distributed the sixth leaflet together with Marie-Luise Jahn. Numerous supporters of the resistance group received long term prison sentences. Opponents of the regime in Hamburg, who had distributed leaflets of the White Rose, were condemned.

Individual leaflets and vague facts about the White Rose reached foreign countries as early as the summer of 1943: the media, especially exiled newspapers, reported in Sweden, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the US. In June of 1943 Thomas Mann honored their resistance at the BBC. The Royal Air Force dropped over five million copies of the sixth leaflet over cities in northern and central Germany; adding an introduction, they called it "A GERMAN LEAFLET – manifesto of the Munich students".

The actions of the White Rose resistance group could not weaken the Nazi dictatorship, however their courage to oppose, a beacon of hope for a different Germany, was inspiration especially to Germans living in exile.

Today the White Rose represents values such as independent thinking, freedom and tolerance. Their timeless legacy is a call for the protection of human rights and the fight against discrimination, racism and violence.