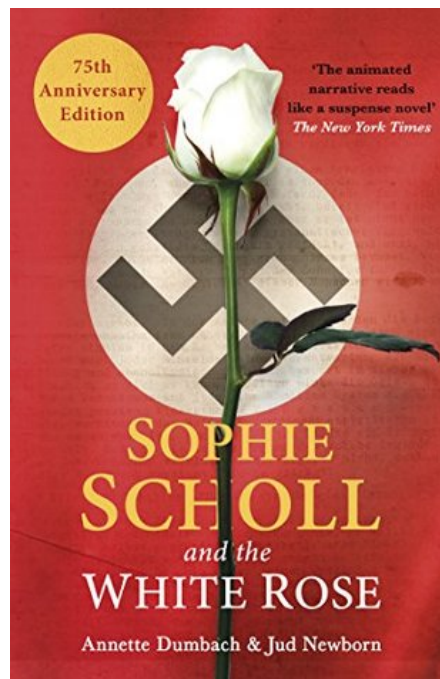




Sophie Scholl and the White Rose

Annette Dumbach , Jud Newborn (Translator)

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This is the gripping story of the five Munich university students who set up an underground resistance movement in World War II, featured in the award-winning Oscar-nominated film, Sophie Scholl - The Final Days. Republished in 2018 to commemorate the 75 years since their arrest & execution.

Sophie Scholl and the White Rose Details

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From Reader Review Sophie Scholl and the White Rose for online ebook

Tom Emanuel says

My review of this book simply consists of the final paragraph, because it is about all that you need to know about this painstakingly researched, magnificently written work of biography and politico-spiritual history: "The impact of the White Rose cannot be measured in tyrants destroyed, regimes overthrown, justice restored. A scale with another dimension is needed, and then their significance is deeper; it goes beyond the Third Reich, beyond Germany; if people like those who formed the White Rose can exist, believe as they believed, act as they acted, maybe it means that this weary, corrupted, and extremely endangered species we belong to has the right to survive, and to keep on trying." Amen.

Jamey M. says

Honestly the only reason why I started reading this book was because I'm doing history fair on Sophie Scholl so this book was useful and came in handy. Normally I don't really like nonfiction books but to my surprise I actually really liked this one (so good job Jud Newborn). This book was extremely helpful on giving me information that was useful to my project. It also included all 6 leaflets that was published by the White Rose, and a bunch of other primary and secondary sources which made me very happy. Jud Newborn wrote this book in 3rd person and wrote like he was watching her and the other members in the anti-Nazi group, almost like I was watching a documentary about her. Also towards the end the book talks about the fates of all the group members and even their family. I knew that about 3/4 of the members were beheaded but what I didn't know is what happened to their families. I assumed that nothing happened to them because they didn't have anything to do with the White Rose, but apparently not. Most of them got sentenced to prison any amount of time in between 6 months - 2 years, that sounds extremely unfair, because they had no idea what the White Rose was let alone that their relatives had anything to do with them. Overall I really enjoyed this book and would definitely recommend this book to people from about 6th grade and up. Only because it is about WW2 and has some gory details included that may not be appropriate for Elementary school students.

Ljuneosborne says

I watched the movie Sophie Scholl a couple years ago and, I'll admit it, I was so moved I cried. I knew there had to be books about the true story behind the movie, and found this book secondhand. It then promptly became lost in the shuffle and giant pile of other books I've read since. I wish I had read it sooner.

The book follows the very true and very amazing story of the White Rose, a group of university students who wrote and distributed leaflets calling Germans to revolt against Hitler during WWII. While focusing on Sophie and her brother Hans, it also explores the backgrounds of all the other major members of the group and their contributions to the writing and editing of the leaflets, as well as the dangers of distributing them. These students embodied fearlessness, representing the indignation of people oppressed by their government and the ideal reaction to such oppression. I couldn't help but feel both empowered by reading this book and awkward as I wondered if I could ever be as bold as these students, how I would act in a similar situation.

The nice thing about reading books about history is that the reader usually knows what's going to happen next. Having watched the movie, I knew they would be caught by the Gestapo, and after a short trial, quietly and immediately executed. Even if I had forgotten the ending the book explains their executions in the preface, and had I skipped that, I'd learn a summary of the entire story by page 10. So if there was any chance of any anger for my supposed spoiler, I hope the book ruining it so quickly as well spares me! What I was surprised about most as I read the book was how little the movie strayed from the truth. The true story seems so unbelievable and dramatic, there was little to exaggerate for the big screen. There is a section of photos in the center of the book, among them a picture of the back of Sophie's indictment, where she had boldly written the word "freedom"(but in the German "freiheit," of course). If that doesn't seem dramatic enough, there is Hans Scholl shouting "Long live freedom!" right before his beheading, a moment in the movie that I was certain was added in for the benefit of the audience.

Even after the narration of the story and all the trials of the rest of the members is over, there is the series of appendixes, where the texts of many documents concerning the trial are translated to English to read. There are all of the leaflets the White Rose wrote, along with a seventh that had only made it to its rough draft before the arrest. There are documents of their "crimes" as documented by the German government of the time, as well as the information they had gathered about the situation at the time. There are also articles that had been published in newspapers about their executions, as well as one from The New York Times that was originally published in 1943. I also found myself staring at the picture of their duplicating machine among the appendixes, thinking of the descriptions of the sleepless nights spent copying leaflets.

This book is for anyone interested in the history of WWII, a story with a very strong female character, or a suspense story filled with surprising details and bold characters.

Kathryn says

This is an updated version of "The Shattering of the German Night," recommended to me by Dr. George Wittenstein, a personal friend of the Scholls.

The story is a moving one, no matter who writes it, but this new edition was more carefully researched yet maintains an extremely compelling narrative.

Kelsey Gould says

Sometimes I think I don't need to read any more about WWII, and always I am wrong. With the world today as it is, I am grateful for examples of twenty-somethings that have gone before me in standing firm in their convictions. This book made me want to know more about The White Rose and the students that comprised it, and to be more intentional about forming my convictions about God's character, justice, and action.

Cindi says

I'm having a bit of a time with this one. It assumes that you know certain things about German history, geography and culture. It seems to be organized strangely. I'm interested though, and so I'm going to finish it.

Update:

This was a difficult book to read. Maybe if I had known more about Germany and its history, it would have been easier. Nonetheless, it was an amazing story and I'm so glad I read it. I'm so happy to know that there were many German people who knew what was going on was wrong, saw through the propaganda and fought despite knowing it could mean their lives. I'm reading another amazing one right now about a totally separate resistance group.

Felicity says

My first introduction to the White Rose was via a lecture when I was at university. I was doing a course called 'Europe at War' and we'd reached the Second World War and Nazi Germany. I heard about this group of students who had written and distributed pamphlets resisting the Nazis and how they had tragically been caught and executed. What really stuck with me though was a story about Hans, which is recounted in this book. Hans was coming home from the front by train when he saw a young Russian Jewish girl, a forced labourer working on the railway line. He had his rations and handed them to this girl. She saw his Nazi uniform and threw it in the dirt. Hans picked it up, brushed it off and went and picked a daisy. He placed the package on the ground in front of the girl, and put the daisy on top. He then told her "I only wanted to bring happiness". He then walked away.

This book brought the other members of the White Rose to life for me and I love them all for their bravery and their disregard for their own safety and for caring and acting while the rest of the German population sat mute. I will, however, always have a special place in my heart for Hans Scholl. Long Live Freedom.

WE WILL NOT BE SILENT

Wordsmith says

My new hero. I'm so glad I read Traudle Junge's memoirs. If not for her story, when, or even would I of ever heard this inspiring, heroic, horrific tale of these University Students ready and willing to take on Hitler, even unto death. A quote from one of their leaflets, "We will not be silent. We are your bad conscious." They were known collectively as "The White Rose." Sophie and her brother Hans along with Christophe Probst and their teacher/advisor Karl Huber were beheaded. Sophie was 21.

Anna says

This book's title singles out Sophie Scholl, but it's really about all of the members of the White Rose Resistance. In fact, her brother Hans was the leader of the group, although she played an equally important part. She was only 21 years old when she was executed for her anti-Nazi activities in Munich. She died that year along with her brother and other members of the White Rose - Hans, three other students, and a University professor. They wrote a total of 6 leaflets during a period of less than 6 months and secretly distributed them. Hans and Sophie were caught dropping copies of the last leaflet at their University.

This book is special because it's not about the Nazis alone. The authors write about the political and philosophical history of Germany that conflicted with, but also enabled, the rise of the Nazis. It's

wonderfully written and not a downer. In fact, after their deaths, the leaflets were still distributed, read in other countries by resistance fighters, and even air-dropped into enemy territory. This book did not sadden me, but instead I found it uplifting. In the worst of circumstances, when everyone else is in the belly of the beast following “group-think,” there is still something within humans that tell them something is wrong. Perhaps it’s simply a conscience. I don’t know. And to risk your life for what you believe.....I still can’t fathom what drives someone to do that.

Here’s an example of an amazing sentence in the book. It’s in reference to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising on April 19, 1943, the largest single revolt by Jews during World War II: “When the powerless and the oppressed, no matter how hopeless their situation, refuse to accept the will of their oppressors, we are all touched with grace.”

Jim Leffert says

Part history, part, biography, and part unabashed tribute, this book tells of a small, idealistic group of students at the University of Munich, calling themselves the White Rose, who actively resisted the Nazis during 1942 and early 1943, and paid for it with their lives. They produced thousands of leaflets denouncing the Nazis, warning Germans that they would be morally culpable for the regime’s actions, and calling for resistance. At great danger to themselves, they transported the pamphlets to various cities all over Germany. From these locations, they mailed the pamphlets to people in other cities throughout Germany and Austria, selected at random from directories.

We think of Munich as cradle of the Nazi movement, but it also was home to this daring, idealistic group (which also came to include one of their professors). These young people also risked their lives by painting anti-Nazi graffiti around the university and city, including just a few meters away from the heavily guarded monument that the Nazis put up to commemorate their origins.

Although the entire group was eventually caught and the central figures, including the siblings Hans and Sophie Scholl, were executed, their pamphlets made their way to the Allies, and who reproduced one and dropped it in large numbers over Germany.

It was inspiring to read about the decision the White Rose students took to move from disgust with the Nazis’ ideology and their perversion of German patriotism, their sacrifice of a whole generation of young Germans serving in the military, and the mass murder of Jews and others, to taking action, and to read that many Germans (albeit a minority) were unsympathetic to the Nazi cause and some did risk their lives by opposing them.

The book also fills in some blanks about what life was like for ordinary people living in Nazi Germany and how the reversals Germany started experiencing in 1942 and early 1943 affected morale. These included Allied bombing of German cities and disasters on the Russian front, notably, the surrender of two hundred thousand troops at Stalingrad.

David Campbell says

I can't recommend this book enough... It's a little known chapter in the German resistance movement during Hitler's hold over Germany. It truly brings to life what life is like in a totalitarian state, and the determination of these brave souls is one hell of a read. Once you get into the meat of it, you won't put it down - as I read the second half of the book in one sitting. It's smoothness and captivation is balanced by excellent historical context, combined with the daily events, inspirations, and journal entries of the group. It is well researched and historical, with a great influx of the emotional, philosophical, and spiritual aspects that were instrumental in driving this small group into action.

"If people like those who formed the White Rose can exist, believe as they believed, act as they acted, maybe it means that this weary, corrupted, and extremely endangered species we belong to has the right to survive, and to keep on trying."

Jason Wilson says

This is a solid and worthy story , though I empathise with those who are irritated by the OTT accolades that inevitably accompany a book with worthy subject matter or question why of the plotters Sophie is the titular character - but then ,why Fawkes not Catesby ?

The white rose were a student movement who distributed anti nazi literature in Munich university and paid for doing so with their lives . Some readers have called them sweet but naive , which seems unduly patronising ; one can see the early allure of Hitler Youth and the need to act on the revulsion that followed this ; one can argue that they were swept along by romantic naivety and could have kept their heads down ; but their courage and conviction to fight evil was indisputable and their posterity deserved . The inspiration of existentialism was an aspect I found interesting , especially when churches were trying to capitulate a but; in some cases to argue for the Jews yes , but in others for survival .

This is decently written and a good story to be aware of .

Jan-Maat says

My impression of the Scholls and the *White Rose* movement (too strong) / organisation(barely that) / gang (?) from when I first learnt of then around the age of seventeen or eighteen was that they were sweet, but silly. After reading this book my first impression hasn't shifted much if at all.

The Scholls formed a small group of Munich students, they wrote and distributed six anti-Nazi leaflets from Juneish 1942 until 18th February 1943 when they were caught. Then they were executed.

That was the Scholls, briefly, now the book. It seemed to me to be pitched at people who had heard of the Scholls or the White Rose but didn't know much about Germany. Reading the book the questions in my mind were who wrote the leaflets, when, how did they manage the practical side, and why did they even start - these questions didn't interest the author, the question of why was only obliquely addressed with the curious suggestion that they might have been motivated by Heidegger - well his writings, not in person which given

his association with the Nazi regime would have been odd.

To my mind, three ways present themselves as to how to approach on the Scholls - a Gestapo view focusing on becoming aware of these leafleteers, attempts to find out more and to track them down down (the advantage of this is that there is some documentary evidence) - a comparative view looking at them in the context of resistance movements in Germany as a whole they were typical in that they emerged relatively late, once allied victory looked to be somewhere between extremely likely and inevitable, they were also typical in that the ideological spectrum of those involved from semi-communist left to authoritarian militaristic right wing was quite broad - or thirdly something focused on the details of the Scholls and their circle, this I gather reading between the lines would be the most difficult since reasonably enough they were quite secretive (often a good idea when involved in clandestine resistance movements) and mostly young, and not particularly exceptional on the face of it, the Scholls were Protestants from Swabia, the others Catholics, mostly students, a couple were in the army as medics, their access to amphetamines helped to fuel the operations of the group, perhaps contributing to their ultimate carelessness.

Dumbach and Newborn's approach is a bit novelistic, skipping backwards and forwards in time with sweeping digressions until page 122 (of 185) when the group start work on their fifth leaflet and there is then a continuous narrative until the end. Before then things happen at random, not all the leaflets are discussed, we don't learn how the group came together or what motivated them to search for a method of resistance or why writing leaflets in particular, but we do learn of their efforts to reach out and make contact with other resistance movements via the younger brother of a man arrested for resistance activities (which seems very amateurish, but it seems the Gestapo were not watching who he was getting into contact with, not that any of them could have known that) and a business man in a group discussing the post-war, post-Hitler ordering of Germany he is strong-armed by the Scholls into writing them a cheque for 500 Reichmark - a fatal mistake for him since cash is harder to trace.

This retelling is quite novelistic, but not novel like enough to be exciting, neither analytical nor a close investigation to be interesting in an exciting way. Quite why Sophie Scholl gets her name on the front cover I don't know, she only dominates the story from the 'trial' onwards when she was as cool as a cucumber and demonstrated sang froid to the end, how the authors know that they don't say, I wondered if they wanted to write a martyr's life for her - but the account isn't quite that, the martyr I believed oughtn't get caught quite so accidentally, but rather deliberately.

At the end of the account of the Scholls and their activities (buying stamps, envelopes and paper in small quantities so as not to create suspicions, staying up all night cracking out copies of their leaflets on a mimeograph, posting leaflets to addresses taken from the phone book) are translations of their leaflets - these are not rousing calls to arms, great careers in advertising did not await them had they not been guillotined by the Nazis. One of their group did have an escape plan in case they were to be rounded up by the Nazis - they involved laying low in a PoW camp for Russian prisoners and then heading across country to Switzerland, in the event he couldn't get into the camp and didn't have the clothing to get through the snow in February.

So my impression remains that the group was sweet but silly, writing leaflets was maybe as effective as painting graffiti, not everybody had supplies of conveniently available Jews or Trades Unionists to help hide or smuggle abroad. It's not a bad book, though I didn't find it particularly clear, I do hope though that there are better books on the subject in print.

John Winston Powell says

One of the best social action books that I have ever read, this book, along with the movie, Sophie Scholl: The

Last Days, are musts for all social justice teachers. This book is written like a novel and shows the incredible story of college students who stood up to Hitler in the only way they could....you not only follow their actions, but are able to read about what motivated them to finally say "Yes, I will act."

The book may be dense for some (many of my high school students probably scan some of the chapters that you give you the background and history of the main principal players in the book) but I think it is all essential. When you finish it, you'll feel like you have met and struggled with young people who have challenged your own apathy. As you read it, you will probably pick one of the protagonists as your favorite: this is not just Sophie's story, but belongs to her brother Hans, who started the White Rose, Christoph, Alex, Willie, and Professor Huber.

Sophie Scholl and the White Rose members, pray for us! You are Christ figures.

Abailart says

Strange title as if the book has a central character, it is Sophie's brother Hans. Possibly the title is a publisher's decision to follow on the success of the Sophie Scholl film.

Much is conjecture - particular conversations, scenes and so forth - but robust imaginative insight is crucial to good history. The book charts not only the history of the White Rose resistance movement but the whole network of interior resistance within Nazi Germany. There are also succinct interpretations of German nationalism from the time of Napoleon, and philosophical movements. Overall, this is an uplifting story of courage and sacrifice with the universal dimension which promises that even in the midst of evil, amongst indifference and cowardice and self-interest, there are good people who do good things.

I have yet to look at the appendices which contain the seven leaflets of the White Rose which the group managed to distribute across Germany, court judgments, and New York Times reports.
