

# To stand defiant: the sophie scholl story

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Bravery. Poise. Safety. These are three words that Sophie Scholl stood for. While evolving into a courageous young woman, Sophie used passive resistance to stand up for the Jews during the latter years of the Holocaust. She did this by joining the White Rose Movement, which is most famous for its leaflets that it distributed during the early 1940s. They also used graffiti to get their message out to the general public. Sophia Magdalena Scholl was born on May 9th, 1921, in Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany (" Sophie Scholl"). Her parents, Robert and Magdalena Scholl, were not Jewish, so neither were Sophie, her brother Hans, or any of her many siblings. In the 1930s, Sophie and Hans joined the Hitler Youth (Hornberger 81).

She was twelve years old (" Sophie Scholl"). Her father, however, hated Hitler, and did so very vocally. He called him a "...

scourge of God" (" Sophie Scholl") and also said he was "...enslaving and destroying the German people" (Hornberger 82) Sophie's father was arrested for speaking his mind, which makes him one of the many reasons that the White Rose was founded. There are several other reasons why the White Rose Movement was founded. Founders Hans Scholl, Willi Graf, and Alexander Schmorell were all soldiers for Germany and saw the horrific treatment of Jews (" White Rose").

The victims were shot, killed, and tortured. Those three soldiers realized that what their county was doing was wrong, and to rebel, founded the White Rose in Munich, Germany. Sophie was a young adult at the age of twenty-two, teaching kindergarten students at the time the White Rose was founded (" Sophie Scholl"). She too knew from Hans's accounts that what Hitler was

doing was exceptionally wrong, so she decided to join the White Rose Movement. The first thing that the movement had to do when it was founded is answer one simple question: what is the goal? To answer that question, the founders had to know their own limits and strengths. They had intelligence on their side for all three founders were medical students at the University of Munich.

However, they did not have the numbers to stage a rebellion by force. If they would, it would have to be silent, undercover. Thus, the goal of the White Rose Movement became clear: to expose the Nazi party for who they really are, because the White Rose can not overthrow them on their own (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum). The White Rose Movement used passive, non-violent resistance, which set them apart from other resistance groups during the Holocaust ("White Rose"). When they first started, the writing skills of the overall group were superb to their other skills, so they wrote persuasive leaflets to convince the public that Hitler in Germany was the equivalent of Satan in his homeland. Throughout the time the White Rose existed, there were two names for the leaflets.

The one that they used was "The White Rose," just like the name of their society ("White Rose"). Later, after they were becoming more and more well-known, to throw off the Gestapo, they renamed the leaflets. Now they were entitled "Leaflets of the Resistance" ("White Rose"). To get the word out, they put copies of them onto the desks of students at the University of Munich before class started so that they would have the opportunity to read the leaflets to many people at the same time. They also used telephone directories to locate and send them out to others ("Sophie Scholl"). The <https://assignbuster.com/to-stand-defiant-the-sophie-scholl-story/>

leaflets themselves, which first appeared in the June of 1942, were full of both eloquent wording and simple writing (“White Rose”).

For example, one of Hans’s most famous sentences that he wrote in the leaflets was “Do not forget that every nation deserves the government that it endures” (“White Rose”). However, the conclusion to the leaflets, which was “Please make as many copies of this leaflet as you can and distribute them”, was very straight to the point, not hiding behind lovely words (Hornberger 82). The leaflets were also well-known for their persistence in getting the public to listen to them. “We will not be silent,” and “We are your bad conscience. The White Rose will not leave you in peace!” sets the tone for how serious they believed the situation in Germany was (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

Over the course of the next eight months, five more leaflets surfaced in the University and around Munich (“White Rose”) In early 1943, the general public started to show more support for the resistance and less for Hitler. They showed this by using graffiti. However, because they still did not know a lot about the resistance itself, their messages were very vague. Many of them, like “Down with Hitler” and “Hitler the mass murderer” were very degrading of Hitler’s status (Hornberger 83). However, some of them, like “Freihart! Freihart! Freedom! Freedom!” shined bright like a beacon of hope for the Jews who were still in hiding (Hornberger 83). Because of the simple fact that they were not very specific or long, they were not as famous as the leaflets that came before them (“White Rose”) Throughout the entire experience, the Gestapo was becoming extremely flustered by the resistance they could find no connection to (“White Rose”).

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Where are these leaflets coming from? How do they keep appearing? And more importantly, who is writing them? These are just some of the questions that the White Rose made the Gestapo ask themselves on a day-to-day basis. However, on February 18th, 1943, Sophie and Hans's luck ran out. A custodian at the University of Munich saw them throwing leaflets out of a window onto the open courtyard below (" Sophie Scholl"). After calling them in, they were arrested the same day (" White Rose"). That was the day that Sophie and Hans knew that they were going to die (Weber 429). Four days later, on February 22nd, Hans, Sophie, and Christoph Probst, an active White Rose member, were sitting in front of the Volksgerichtshof, or the People's Court.

Even though they were granted a trial, the three knew their fate; it was already decided (Weber 429). They were to die for treasonous behavior against the Fatherland. Because Sophie knew that she had nothing to lose and her cause was just, she was extremely brave and poised during the trial (Hornberger 84-85). She showed no signs of weakness, only strength, when she defended her case by saying a few simple words. " Somebody, after all, had to make a start. What we wrote and said is believed by many others.

They just don't dare express themselves as we did" (Hornberger 84). That same day, at 5: 00 P. M., the Scholls and Probst were killed by beheading (" Sophie Scholl"). However, in the hours, minutes, seconds before they met their doom, the White Rose members wrote and spoke beautiful words that shined with the uttermost truth and inspired emotions deep within others.

Sophie held her head high when walking to her death and wrote one word on a scrap of paper. "Freedom" was found in her cell after her untimely death (Weber 429). Hans wrote six powerful words on his cell wall before he met his maker. "To stand defiant before overwhelming power" put the very essence of the White Rose Movement into words (Weber 429). Also, moments before the blade hit his neck, he screamed "freedom".

Later, many others would be caught and tried for association with the White Rose. These people include Founder Willi Graf, Founder Alexander Schmorell, and Professor Kurt Huber, a man who steered the White Rose towards completing their cause ("White Rose"). Many people ask why it is so important to learn about Sophie Scholl and the White Rose Movement. Were they brave or foolish to do what they did? The White Rose inspired glorious rebellion among the youth and adults alike because they knew how to show different audiences what they thought. They also helped expose the Nazi party for who they really were in their own homeland. On top of accomplishing their cause, the White Rose members, especially Sophie Scholl, evolved into brave young adults who used non-violent resistance to stand up for the Jews during the final years of the Holocaust.

It is blatantly obvious to say that they were one of the bravest resistance groups to stand up for what they believed was right.