

**SOLVING MYSTERIES:  
*THE SECRET OF "THE WHITE ROSE"***

**By Jud Newborn**



***HISTORICAL ADDENDUM TO:***

**SOPHIE SCHOLL  
AND THE WHITE ROSE  
*The Remarkable German Students  
Who Defied Hitler***

FOREWORD BY  
**STUDS TERKEL**

**Book by Jud Newborn and  
Annette Dumbach**

*Afterword* © 2006 Jud Newborn

ACCLAIM FOR  
**SOPHIE SCHOLL & THE WHITE ROSE:**

*“The animated narrative reads like a suspense novel.”* —THE NEW YORK TIMES

*“This is a story that commands our attention.”* —NEWSWEEK INTERNATIONAL

*“Superbly written.”* —LIBRARY JOURNAL

*“Inspiring—and could not be more timely.”*  
 —STUDS TERKEL

*“Unusually powerful and compelling. . . . Among the indispensable literature of modern political culture.”*  
 —Han-Wolf von Wietersheim, DAS PARLAMENT (Official publication of the German Bundestag)

*“Heart-wrenching. . . a story few readers will forget.”*  
 —SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

*“Dumbach and Newborn have told their compelling story beautifully.”* —WASHINGTON JEWISH WEEK

*“Could change your life forever.”* —DAYTON DAILY NEWS




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**“OUR BEST”:** German TV Audiences Vote Sophie and Hans Scholl of The White Rose the 4<sup>th</sup> Most Important Germans of All Time, Winning Over Bach, Goethe, Gutenberg, Willy Brandt, Bismarck and Albert Einstein--2004

**U.S. Congressional Proclamation Honoring The White Rose**, Accepted by Unanimous Consent, 1987

**The White Rose is part of the permanent exhibition of The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum**, Washington, D.C.

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*“Good, splendid young people! You shall not have died in vain; you shall not be forgotten.”* —THOMAS MANN, NOBEL LAUREATE (Broadcasting from Exile, 6/27/43)

***NOTE TO READERS:** These crucial findings fully update my co-authored book, *Sophie Scholl and the White Rose*. They could not be included in the new edition because of time constraints. With this historical addendum I offer it to all members of the public who are eager to know the complete story, however controversial—especially the answers to the two most frequently asked questions about Hans Scholl, his sister Sophie, and the White Rose itself.*

***These revelations will make far more sense—and be far more satisfying—if you have read the book first!***

*My contact information for lecturing and the media appears at the end.*

**There are two pivotal mysteries** about the passionate young members of the White Rose German anti-Nazi resistance that have long intrigued laymen and scholars alike. The answers to these questions have even eluded family and friends of the White Rose ever since the group began its brave and lonely defiance of Hitler in June 1942.

What happened to motivate the 1937 transformation of the teenaged Hans Scholl and his sister Sophie from fanatical Hitler Youth leaders to passionate anti-Nazis? And why did Hans and his friend Alexander Schmorell choose "The White Rose" as the name for their resistance organization?

New sources provide vital clues for finally solving both of these mysteries. These include the enormous trove of Gestapo interrogation transcripts discovered in the former East Berlin in 1990, among them those covering Hans Scholl's *two* arrests—the first in 1937 and the second on February 18, 1943. Other sources include my own investigations since the book's original 1986 publication, and the meticulous research of Eckard Holler, whose important monograph can be found in the bibliography to the new edition.

"The name 'The White Rose' was chosen randomly," Hans told his Gestapo interrogator on the weekend of his February

18th arrest. "I acted on the presupposition that certain concrete concepts must be present for effective propaganda. In themselves, these concepts would mean nothing, but would sound good—thereby giving the impression that there was an agenda."

"It is possible," he said, adding to his wordy yet vague response, "that I chose the name on a purely emotional basis, since at the time I was under the influence of Brentano's Spanish ballad, 'Die Rose Blanca.' "

This explanation has since been taken at face value. So far as the goal of "sounding good" was concerned, the name "White Rose" was certainly resonant, standing inevitably as a symbol of purity against the darkness of Nazi terror. Hans and Alex were surely aware of this power when they dubbed themselves "The White Rose."

But as the leaflets bearing this name show, Hans and his comrades were far too literate, thoughtful and politically motivated for this to be a sufficient explanation. The reasons behind the name they chose surely would have been important to them in substance as well as in symbol. After all, it was for this resistance that they all were risking their lives.

What might Hans have had in mind, then, with his off-handed reference to an obscure and inoffensive 19th century poem and his vague, yet wordy explanation? Was he trying to protect someone?

If so, it would not be the first time he had misled the Gestapo in order to protect a friend. On December 13, 1937, when he was barely nineteen, a fresh-faced cavalry recruit and still a Nazi stalwart, Hans was suddenly arrested by the Gestapo. Another twenty teens were also rounded up.

Of the charges against Hans, the most serious one was that of homosexual activity, "perpetrated" when he was only sixteen.

Before discovery of the Gestapo transcripts, Inge Scholl, the sibling's older sister and "keeper of the truth," had claimed that Hans was arrested simply for having joined the illegal

youth group,"d.j.1.11" in 1937. Gestapo records show there was much more to it.

Prior to December of 1936, when all organizations other than the Hitler Youth were declared illegal, many Hitler Youth members felt no contradiction in belonging to such groups. Hans actually became involved with the "d.j.1.11" long before it was outlawed.

As early as the turn of the last century, a significant segment of German youth felt a growing urge to seek freedom from the stifling restraints of "bourgeois" society—a class also unloved by the Nazis. As George Mosse, one of the first cultural historians to explain the origins of Nazism showed years ago, the appeal of these exclusively "bündisch" male groups was deeply rooted in the culture of Germany's distinctive, counter-cultural youth movement known originally as the "Wandervögel." Elements of homoeroticism, if not actual homosexuality, were fundamental to these groups.

Bündisch youth sought a connection with the landscape and folk traditions of their own German "Heimat," or homeland, even while looking enthusiastically beyond Germany's boundaries for inspiration. Nothing was more important than "wandering," or hiking throughout the forests and mountains. They allowed their often naked bodies to commune with their country's natural "folk geography," as if this might imprint some deep, collective meaning upon their own flesh and bones and thereby revitalize their Germanic identities. They often expressed their new-found freedom in small ways, for example, by camping out in Lappish folk "Kothes" rather than paramilitary-style tents like those favored later by the Hitler Youth. The well-formed youthful male body, often depicted in the nude, was idealized as the natural expression of their ideals.

The homoeroticism of these groups was not intended, at least overtly, to cross the line into actual sexual activity. As Hans Blüher, the primary proponent of the Wandervögel, had written, homoeroticism was to be a kind of glue that would bind these young men together, its energy sublimated and directed outward for the vital task of cultural renewal.

Nonetheless, group activities in such a free and exhilarating atmosphere sometimes fostered sexual play as well as intense romantic crushes between teenaged boys. For most, if not all, this was a phase that passed when they grew a little older, widened their social circles and began dating girls. This held for the “d.j.1.11” group which Hans had joined in 1934 along with other Hitler Youth from his home town of Ulm, including his own superior as well as many of the boys he led.

But any homosexual activity was anathema to National Socialism. The notorious “Paragraph 175” of the German criminal code, which outlawed homosexuality, was made far more stringent in September 1935. Prior to Hitler’s take-over, Magnus Hirschfeld’s German homosexual emancipation movement, the most successful in the world, had counted among its supporters such leading figures as the great sociologist Max Weber, who helped draft the Weimar Republic’s constitution. Now Hirschfeld’s movement lay shattered. The library of his “Institute for Sexual Research” was the first to be ransacked in 1933, its books tossed on the bonfires along with those of Thomas Mann, Sophie Scholl’s beloved Heinrich Heine, and other supposedly corrupt, “Jewified” expressions of the best and most humane literature which Germany had to offer.

Even allegations of homosexuality now led to wide-scale persecution, including the arrests of over 100,000 men, as well as the imprisonment of at least 50,000. Some of these men were relegated to concentration camps, where they were forced to wear the humiliating “Pink Triangle” on their uniforms. Many of them, abandoned by family members and rejected by other inmates, were castrated, tortured and murdered. Even into the 1990s, the German government failed to pay survivors the restitution offered to other victims of Nazism.

As elsewhere in the world, this case shows that prejudice against homosexuality has not died out to this day. No doubt many today would consider attributing any homosexual behavior to one of Germany’s greatest anti-Nazi heroes a “tarnishing” of his reputation and achievement.

Up until his 1937 arrest, Hans had thought of himself the ideal Nazi youth—decisive, devoted, “fanatic.” He hadn't even known that same-sex sexual activity was a “crime,” he told the Gestapo, until he read about it in the newspaper in late 1935. Although he had continued his relationship with his special friend Rolf for a some time after—one which he described to the Gestapo as “an overpowering love that required some means of relief”—he never identified himself as homosexual. In fact, by the time of his arrest, he was done with “d.j.1.11” and already dating a string of girls. Later on he would have several intense heterosexual affairs, as the book recounts.

Ultimately six of the twenty boys rounded up were indicated, but only two were actually tried and convicted. One of those two was Hans Scholl, whom the Gestapo had entrapped a web of corroborating evidence from which he could not extricate himself.

The Gestapo transcript reveals headstrong, garrulous testimony as Hans strove to justify himself while protecting Rolf from indictment. “I am inclined to be passionate,” Hans said. “I can only justify my actions on the basis of the great love I felt for Rolf. I can hardly comprehend my behavior today.” He argued that the Hitler Youth itself had created the conditions for same-sex relationships by prohibiting interaction with girls. And wasn't fanatical “service to the Volk” always touted as the most important thing anyway?

Nonetheless, Hans' confession was poignant and gallant. “I must admit that I am the guilty party,” Hans told the Gestapo. “To some extent, I was in a position of authority over Rolf and he felt obliged to submit.”

In this context, Hans' words are transformed from a confession of wrongdoing into a sacrifice on behalf of others, an early indication of his emerging adult character. Although Hans was found guilty, the lenient judge who convicted him on June 2, 1938 let him off, primarily because of his exemplary record and the many strong testimonials offered in his defense. This included high praise from his superior in the cavalry. His earlier actions, the judge reasoned, had amounted to a teenaged “indiscretion” committed under the pernicious

influence of an “older” man—Ernst Reden, who was all of twenty-two in 1938. Reden, a dear friend of all of the Scholl siblings, was less lucky than Hans. Also let off for “time already served,” Reden was immediately whisked away by the Gestapo to a concentration camp.

The experience of having the Gestapo dig into the most intimate details of his life for an extended time, leading to a public trial, and for reasons he originally had thought inconsequential, obviously ignited a transformation in Hans Scholl’s views about Nazism from admiration to loathing.

"If you tear our hearts from our bodies, you yourselves will burn to death for it," he wrote in his diary not long after.

With these words it seems as if Hans were suddenly speaking not only for himself, but for anyone who could fall afoul of tyranny—for all of humanity. The anguish and outrage that Sophie must have felt over the persecution of her beloved older brother and Ernst Reden must have had a powerful effect on her too. Over the seven months of his travails, Hans had caught up with his wiser sister, maturing into a young man willing to stand up for truth, justice and love without bounds, even if it meant protecting others, and at great personal risk.

Which leads us to the mystery of the White Rose name. “B. Traven” was the pseudonym of a German novelist elusive as quicksilver. Most likely he was the actor and communist revolutionary, Ret Marut, who fled to Mexico from Germany following the collapse of the short-lived “Soviet” republic in Bavaria in 1919. He wrote many novels from exile, although only one was a resounding success: *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, later filmed by John Huston, with Humphrey Bogart as its star.

Once the Nazis came to power, Traven’s radical writings were deemed so inimical that his entire oeuvre was symbolically tossed into the bonfires, and their reading banned.

It is likely that one of these banned novels, *The White Rose* (*Die Weisse Rose*), published in Germany in 1929, found its way into Hans Scholl's hands. Traven's La Rosa Blanca—The

White Rose—is the name of an idealized hacienda where the mixed Indian-Mexican peasants maintain their folkways and live in harmony, close to the land, until a ruthlessly exploitative American oil concern appears on the scene. La Rosa Blanca sits on an island surrounded by rich oil fields. But the patriarch of the hacienda puts no store in money and refuses to sell.

Seeking to steal the hacienda's holdings, Condor Oil spirits away the village's illiterate leader, presenting his signature on a bill of sale when in fact they have had him murdered. Offering to help the villagers, the local governor promises the Rosa Blanca's inhabitants that he will try to give them back their freedom and their lives, even though he knows that his efforts against the U.S. imperialist juggernaut must fail.

This story would have resonated powerfully for Hans Scholl and Alex Schmorell as the idea of creating a group to resist the Nazis coalesced in their minds. The words of its denouement seem almost inescapable in their kinship with the spirit and message of the German White Rose:

" 'I promise you I'll do everything in my power to discover the truth,' " the governor tells the villagers. " 'And I promise you that when I've found the truth, the White Rose won't have been plucked for nothing. If, perhaps, it can never bloom again in all its beauty, it shall certainly not fade away, never. It shall bear fruit that will ripen. And that shall be the beginning of the liberation of the country and its citizens. We will have a country in which every single rose, white or red, shall have freedom to bloom, to be as beautiful as it was meant to be, and to flourish for as long as it was intended to flourish.' "

The novel's conclusion resonates even further with the White Rose's vision of a federated, democratic Europe founded on socialist principles—as well as their uncompromising rejection of Nazism's racist ethnocentrism.

Despite their loss, the residents of the Rosa Blanca find a larger world opening up for them. "They became aware of. . . the thought that all men on earth are one," Traven wrote, "that everyone is part of a great brotherhood." Gradually they came

to see themselves as part of "an ever greater homeland that seemed to have no limit, comprising every man, every nation, every thought that was ever thought. . . . A day was coming when everyone could rightly say," Traven concluded, "today we are citizens of the world. What greater thing can a man gain than a greater love for his fellow man!"

If, as it seems likely, Traven's *The White Rose* was the inspiration for the name, why would Hans Scholl have given the Gestapo such a vacuous explanation—saying they had picked their name at random, while still providing them with a concrete source, a harmless 19th century poem called "The White Rose?"

The reason now seems obvious: he was probably trying to divert the Gestapo's attention away from his dear friend Josef Söhnngen—the "bachelor" bookseller who secretly nurtured the White Rose resistance by providing a meeting place and an endless supply of banned books from his cache to boost their morale. He and Hans had also exchanged warm, if hardly romantic letters, especially when Hans was serving on the Eastern Front. And the Gestapo interrogation transcripts from 1943 indicate that Söhnngen later was asked whether or not he knew that Hans, even before his White Rose activities, had already been "tainted" because of his 1937 arrest. This was obviously an attempt to instill fear in the 40-year old, unmarried Söhnngen that he might be accused of homosexuality as well as sedition.

Hans therefore knew Söhnngen was likely to be picked up. So he improvised in an attempt to protect his friend from being incriminated, and perhaps even suffering the fate that Hans already feared lay in store for himself.

As Traven wrote, "what greater thing can a man gain than a greater love for his fellow man!"

**“DIE GEDANKEN SIND FREI!”  
 (“YOUR THOUGHTS ARE FREE! )**

*Sophie Scholl played this great German freedom song  
 on her flute under her father's Gestapo prison  
 cell window at midnight to give him courage  
 during his imprisonment*

*Die Gedanken sind frei, my thoughts freely flower.  
 Die Gedanken sind frei, my thoughts give me power.  
 No scholar can map them, no hunter can trap them,  
 No man can deny: Die Gedanken sind frei!*

*So I think as I please, and this gives me pleasure.  
 My conscience decrees this right I must treasure.  
 My thoughts will not cater to duke or dictator,  
 No man can deny: Die Gedanken sind frei!*

*And if tyrants take me and throw me in prison,  
 My thoughts will burst free like blossoms in season.  
 Foundations will crumble, the structure will tumble,  
 And free men will cry: Die Gedanken sind frei!*

*(Courtesy of Dover Publications, from "Songs of Work and Protest,"  
 Edith Fowke and Joe Glazer, eds., New York, 1973. Translation:  
 Arthur Kevers.)*

**ABOUT JUD NEWBORN:  
TESTIMONIALS, BIOGRAPHY, LECTURES,  
MEDIA RESOURCE**

**SELECT TESTIMONIALS**

*"Lauded by such publications as Newsweek and The New York Times, and by such institutions as the U.N., Princeton's Jewish Center and the Hebrew Union College, Dr. Jud Newborn speaks with dramatic power and a deeply felt passion that leaves his audiences both moved and exhilarated."* —LIFESTYLES MAGAZINE

*"You have every right to be proud of all your meaningful accomplishments on teaching the lessons of the Holocaust, and I congratulate you."* —ROBERT M. MORGENTHAU, NY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

*"Your work is so impressive and important."* —LIZ SMITH, NATIONAL COLUMNIST

*"Uses his unique skill to point out the links between Nazism and the Islamic extremists in our post-9/11 global community."* —SUSAN PEIREZ, SPIELBERG SHOAH FOUNDATION

*"Held our audiences spellbound."* —VIC SKOLNICK AND CHARLOTTE SKY, CINEMA ARTS CENTRE

*"Unique and passion-filled. Riveting presentation. The large room filled with lay people, scholars, Jews and gentiles sat together in silent fascination, awaiting the story of the Jewish anti-Nazi resistance to unfold. And unfold it did, with all the drama of a Le Carre spy novel. Dr. Newborn was complimented as one of the best speakers ever to grace our community."* —MELANIE ZEITLER, JEWISH FEDERATION, SOUTH BEND, I.N.

*"What impressed your correspondent most was the revelatory lecture by dynamic Jud Newborn. Thanks to this event, his great works have come to the attention of the*

*world.*" —DAVID HOROWITZ, SR. CORRESPONDENT,  
UN PRESS CORPS

*"Wide-ranging knowledge, masterful delivery. Related the story of unsung Jewish and Christian Holocaust heroes to today's most pressing current events. Our ideal scholar-in-residence."* —RACELLE WEIMAN, HEBREW UNION COLLEGE

*"We were all charmed and impressed with your knowledge and personable eloquence. Now we have to find some excuse to invite you out here again."* —CHARLENE BALDRIDGE AND DIANE SINOR, OLD GLOBE THEATER, SAN DIEGO

*"Thank you, thank you, thank you for that vibrant and eloquent program. You were appropriately somber, appropriately hopeful—and always, always, inspiring. I found so much of what you said to be the core of my Catholic upbringing. This shows how ecumenical your message is."* —CHRISTINA VASQUEZ, HOLOCAUST MUSEUM HOUSTON

*"I would strongly urge colleges and universities to offer their podiums to Jud Newborn. Matters of Human Rights, Justice, Peace, Courage and Conscience find resonance in his lectures on the White Rose."* —PROF. JAMES MCNUTT, THOMAS MORE COLLEGE, K.Y.

*"Your speech was just perfect for our leadership."*  
—RICHARD HEIDEMAN, INTERNATIONAL  
PRESIDENT, B'NAI B'RITH

*"The evening was our Major Gifts event, the highest level of giving in our community. Your presentation was just what we had hoped for. Our guests were totally absorbed."*  
—UJA/FEDERATION, C.T.

*"I am still dazzled by how much I and my students learned when you were here."* —PROF. RANDALL AUSTIN,  
NEWMAN UNIVERSITY, K.S.

*“You are making a huge intellectual impact with your public lectures. Warmest congratulations.”* —PROF. JOHN BOYER, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

*“A compelling and riveting speaker.”* —PROF. SALLY DRUCKER, NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE, N.Y.

*“Inspiring!”* —LAUREN BLOOM, TUFTS UNIVERSITY

## BIOGRAPHY

**DR. JUD NEWBORN**, a New York-based scholar, lecturer and journalist, has spoken coast-to-coast, from the Simon Wiesenthal Center in L.A. and San Diego’s Old Globe Theater to the National Arts Club in New York and the U.N.’s Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium. There he called out against the Serbian “ethnic-cleansing” of Bosnian Muslims just days after the fall of Srebrenica in 1995.



A former Fulbright Fellow specializing in cultural anthropology, the study of Nazism and modern extremism, Dr. Newborn is a pioneer in the creation of Holocaust Museums, including New York’s Museum of Jewish Heritage, where he served as Founding Historian and curator. Working with the Project Director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Dr. Newborn was also responsible for insuring that the White Rose became part of that museum’s permanent exhibition.

Dr. Newborn was educated at New York University, Cambridge University, and the University of Chicago, where he was awarded his Ph.D. with Distinction. During the course of his European fieldwork, Newborn hunted down former SS officers to interview. He also risked his freedom by working briefly undercover for Poland’s Solidarity Freedom Movement, six months into Communist military rule.

A seasoned on-camera expert, Dr. Newborn has appeared widely in the media, from the CBS Morning News to NPR’s

“All Things Considered.” He has written for The New York Times and The Jerusalem Post, among other leading publications. This includes the world’s first Op Ed piece—written just one day after 9/11—in which he pinpointed the ideology and motivation behind the World Trade Center/Pentagon attacks. It was cited by Governor Mario Cuomo on Larry King Live to answer the question, “Why do they hate us?”

Dr. Newborn is co-author of *Sophie Scholl and the White Rose*, a book that tells the entire story behind the Oscar-nominated German film, “Sophie Scholl: The Final Days.” He is working to develop the broader story of the White Rose as a major motion picture.

Dr. Newborn currently serves as Special Projects Curator and Director of Development for Long Island’s renowned Cinema Arts Centre, an international mecca for the finest filmmakers, celebrated actors, film critics and performers.

### LECTURES TOPICS INCLUDE:



**Speaking at the UN**

- ◆ **DEFYING HITLER: GERMANY’S WHITE ROSE STUDENT RESISTANCE** — Role Models in the Fight Against Hatred, Extremism and Repression of Dissent, Abroad and at Home
- ◆ **ISLAMIST AND GLOBAL ANTI-SEMITISM:** Its Relation to Nazism and Today’s Crisis of Terror (*Power Point Slide Show*)

- ◆ **LIONS OF JUDAH: THE UNSUNG STORY OF JEWISH ANTI-NAZI RESISTANCE**—and its Lessons for Confronting Extremism, From 9/11 to Today
- ◆ **TO LIFE! A HOLOCAUST HERO’S MODERN MIRACLE —AN EVENING OF MYSTERY AND REVELATION.** Dr. Newborn poignantly interweaves

his own personal story and adventures with the lost world of the Jewish shtetl, and the amazing tale of the first man to bring the news of the Holocaust to the West.

◆ **OTHER TOPICS, ADDRESSES AND PERSONAL APPEARANCES BY ARRANGEMENT**

**RESOURCE TO THE MEDIA**

“Speaking truth to power,” Dr. Newborn, a seasoned on-camera expert, offers his lively and articulate perspectives to the TV, radio and print media. He discusses current events as they relate to history, politics, culture, the Holocaust, the Middle East, extremism, “sexual culture wars,” film, human rights, civil liberties, and other controversies of the day.

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