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Johannes Tuchel. *Der vergessene Widerstand: Zu Realgeschichte und Wahrnehmung des Kampfes gegen die NS-Diktatur.* Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2005. 279 S. EUR 20.00, paper, ISBN 978-3-89244-943-0.

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Research on resistance has often been the bailiwick of people with agendas: those who imagine that its history can guide society; historians who like to lionize certain figures; politicians or states seeking rhetorical or political advantage. Few cases illustrate this as well as the German representations of resistance to Nazism during the Cold War. Divided by opposite sides of the superpower standoff, German official memories on opposing sides of the border were as companionable as fire and water, as Erich Honecker used to say of socialism and communism. Nearly two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, some forms and acts of resistance still remain suppressed, distorted, or forgotten, writes Johannes Tuchel, director of Germany's Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand and editor of this collection drawn from the Dachau Symposium on Contemporary History. Resistance research thus requires not only an examination of the historical motives, goals and means of opposition, but also an analysis of their consequences since 1945.

This book does not cover all acts or even fields of "forgotten resistance." Its aim, rather, is to examine examples that uncover mechanisms of forgetting, ignoring, and suppressing, and to provoke further work on resistance (p. 26). The broadly inclusive definition of resistance employed by Tuchel and his colleagues suggests that much work remains to be done. This collection's division into two parts, history and reception, reveals the difficulties of separating the history of resistance from postwar circumscriptions of it. The two informed each other, as illustrated by Claudia Frölich's essay, "Zum Umgang mit dem Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus in der Bundesrepublik." Frölich's focus on the "judicial phases and themes" in West Germany's early perceptions of resistance is a reflection of her finely researched book on Fritz Bauer, *Wider die Tabuisierung des Ungehorsams* (2005).

The July 20, 1944, conspiracy against Adolf Hitler became the key fragment in the effort to salvage a "usable past" from the German wreckage at *Stunde Null*. In the fledgling German democracy, however, popular scorn for the conspiracy enjoyed political and judicial backing, along with that of prominent historians. The legal context in both states cast soldiers who had obeyed existing law, abiding by their oaths, against the handful who had not. (In the postwar drama, few seemed to notice the contradiction in statements made by ex-Wehrmacht officers, such as Hubert Lanz, who condemned the resisters as oath-breakers while also claiming to their credit in court that they had saved lives by defying Hitler's orders). Konrad Adenauer generally condemned right-wing propaganda, yet advanced the image of the Wehrmacht as an honorable, unblemished institution, implicitly supporting soldiers who had not resisted. Right-wing political leaders played on political, popular, and judicial

opinion. On the campaign trail, Otto Ernst Remer, a key figure in the suppression of the July 20 plot, railed against the conspirators as traitors paid from abroad.

In October 1951, under American and British pressure, Adenauer performed a ***volte face***, reversing his determined stand a few days earlier not to deliver a declaration honoring the July 20 conspirators. According to Frölich, however, the lack of a well-anchored basis for establishing the legality of resistance constituted the central barrier to recognition of the July conspirators. Fritz Bauer, driven by Nazism from his German home as a Jew and Socialist, led the way in establishing a place of honor for the July conspiracy in West Germany. As Attorney General for Braunschweig, he won an important legal decision in a 1952 ruling that the July conspirators had committed legal resistance against a state that had been, in fact, unlawful (***Unrechtsstaat***). The judiciary's reaction was soon to come, however, in a 1961 decision against a war deserter holding that individuals did not have the same right to resist as those of the conspirators, since they did not operate on the basis of a reasonably sensible plan suited to end (***abbrechen***) Nazi rule. West German popular opinion continued to reject the July 20 conspirators long after official memory had changed.

Tuchel's contribution to the volume illustrates the contemporaneous political deployment of historiography on the east side of the Wall, where popular opinion and judicial decisions were inconsequential, in the case of the Stasi's "reinterpretation" of the Rote Kapelle during the late 1960s. Tuchel briefly rebuts West German defamation of the group as a ring of communist agents before relating the sordid reinvention of the Rote Kappelle in East Germany as propaganda: the Stasi cast the Rote Kappelle not just as a part of SED party history and as legitimation for its claimed anti-fascism, but also as a forerunner of the Stasi itself and a motivation for cooperation with it. Distorted though it was, the Stasi's "history" became the group's most influential portrait. Indeed, until the 1980s it was widely accepted in West Germany, albeit accompanied with an evaluation of the group as "communist spies." Backing accounts of the Rote Kapelle in both East and West Germany were the "reputed facts" provided by misleading constructions of the group in Gestapo documentation, a caution to neo-Rankeans who find no evidence so convincing as literal interpretations of what one clerk said to another, even when those clerks worked for a regime that preferred to advance by deception as long as it cost less in material resources than frontal assault. Tuchel argues that even today, the Stasi-invented account has not been debunked fully.

One can only wish that the West German record of constructing resistance history could be as easily mined as the East German one. In his essay, Ekkehard Klausa identifies the meaning of typical German antisemitism before Auschwitz in order to understand the antisemitism of conservative resisters, primarily the July 20 conspirators. After Auschwitz, German antisemitism was identified with extermination and genocide--but this was only its most intense form. Before the Nazi dictatorship, conservative German antisemitism was seen as an "illness of the time," part of the universal mechanism of self-identification through marking some as outsiders (p. 185); its point was self-construction, not degradation of the other.[1] It expressed wishes that Jews would be separated from Germans, but certainly would not have supported the Holocaust.

Of course, the antisemitism of conservative Germans was considerably more intense than that of their liberal fellow nationals. Klausa wants to know where the conservative resisters fit on the spectrum between Alfred Hugenberg and Theodor Heuss. Not all at the same point, of course; the antisemitism of only some conservatives radicalized with the coming of the Nazis. Impossible to overlook, however, is the aggressive

antisemitism of the right wing of the "national conservative" resistance. Not even the Holocaust was sufficient to open their eyes. For Klausa, the attitudes of some conservative resisters support Alexander and Margaret Mitscherlich's conclusion that the conscience of some was blotted out by the Hitler myth during the time of Germany's blitzkrieg victories, and returned to duty again only with Germany's defeat. One wonders at such a point whether lemmings or migratory animals in search of food may also be said to possess a conscience.

This "extreme right" antisemitism was no longer that of the "conventional conservatives," where the mainstream of the resistance remained (p. 198). Antisemitism weakened the morality of German conservatives so much that they did not think twice about the suffering of German Jews between 1933 and 1938. Conservative elites, in their "lack of discernment" (***Einsichtslosgkeit***), helped further antisemitism even after the ***Kristallnacht*** pogrom (p. 198). The conservative desire to separate Jews from Germans facilitated Nazi persecution of Jews, writes Klausa, touching on the social basis and social limitations of National Socialism. It created a climate that hindered open and half-open criticism of the regime and questions about the persecution of the Jews. To support this argument, Klausa calls the thesis that the Rosenstrasse protest of 1943 changed Gestapo plans "defensible," if "daring." The argument that Bishop Galen, reflecting popular fears, caused Hitler to issue a decree suspending "euthanasia" is also "defensible if "daring" (p. 199).

Klausa ends with a call for an open exchange of defensible ideas rather than a dogmatic insistence on any particular interpretation that stymies debate. Ulrich Renz's essay on Georg Elser responds to this plea, pointing out that discussion of Elser in postwar years was dominated by treacherous reports, including a rumor that he was a Nazi agent. In 1949, perhaps indicating the "conscience" of a time that considered resisters traitors, the memorably astute Martin Niemoller declared incorrectly and publicly that Elser had been an SS man with the rank of Scharführer, and compared his action with the Reichstag arson. Elser came as close to killing Hitler as Claus von Stauffenberg had, writes Renz, but he acted nearly five years earlier, in time to interrupt processes that led to the Holocaust. Had Elser succeeded, Hitler might be remembered as an effective leader, and as more of a separatist "conventional conservative" antisemite than an "extreme right" genocidal one.

Elser's rehabilitation, however, would come years after the July 20 conspirators had been transformed officially from defamed to heroic Germans whose plot served as the archetype of resistance. It owed much to the initiative of individuals, particularly Joseph Peter Stern, and by the 1990s to the Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand. Renz mentions Klaus Maria Brandauer's biographical film on Elser only in passing as part of his brief account of the Georg Elser Arbeitskreis, a group founded in 1988. A weakness of the collection in general is the scant attention it pays to memory and representations of resistance in nonscholarly works, including the popular media. A glaring flaw in Renz's contribution is the absence of citations. The cryptic appendix titled "Literature" is hardly helpful, omitting mention of authors and sources it quotes at great length. For example, a long excerpt from Benedikt Erenz's article "Dreizehn Minuten" in ***Die Zeit*** is introduced merely as the periodical's high praise for the Elser exhibit in Königsbronn.

The groups and individuals above can hardly be characterized as neglected by historians. In contrast, the history of "forgotten" resistance in this volume is presented in five essays: Andreas Graf considers the resistance of anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists and Jürgen Zarusky provides a fine piece on the resistance of concentration camp prisoners in Dachau. Barbara Schieb writes an essay on the history and reception in both

postwar German states of the Gemeinschaft für Frieden and Aufbau, Bernd Florath accounts for the European Union, and Peter Steinkamp examines "rescue resistance" of those in uniform. If "resistance" is defined so that it was possible even for concentration camp prisoners, as Zarusky writes, it becomes easier to conceive of the possibilities for resisting among un-imprisoned ordinary Germans. It also becomes easier to agree with Tuchel that a considerable amount of research remains before a full account of resistance can be constructed.

Nevertheless, it remains important to remember that Germans generated far more will to follow Hitler than resist him. A widespread notion attributes this tendency to the alleged impossibility or futility of resistance. This belief in turn draws on an archetype of resistance established around the July 20 plot. In the face of an all-powerful state, resistance was powerless to effect change; those who attempted it not only met terrible fates but toyed with the fates of friends and family members as well. This archetype's capacity for exonerating all Germans continues to dominate, despite the expanding number of incidents studied under the rubric of opposition and resistance, especially since the 1980s. Thus, the continuing study of "resistance" seems headed toward discussion of the various ways Germans refused to participate in the National Socialist mass movement. Indeed, a few months ago, on the occasion of the ceremonies marking Claus von Stauffenberg's 100th birthday, Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand's Peter Steinbach said "that the very big theme" of future resistance history, which is as important to deal with as military resistance, will be "those who really showed civil courage," like those who helped Jews and war deserters: "[w]e speak of unsung heroes, we speak of silent [*stille*] helpers."[2] Although a public act of dissent was almost certainly more courageous than one the regime failed to notice, Tuchel added volume to this emphasis on "civil courage" (p. 19) and silence in a recent Associated Press story by arguing that there were "quiet" ways young men like Joseph Ratzinger--now Pope Benedict XVI--could defy Nazi authority.[3]

But why speak of stories of civil courage as stories of silence? Collective street protests (like Rosenstrasse and Witten in 1943)[4] and various Catholic uprisings before and during the war against decrees removing crucifixes from public places and closure of monasteries are absent from Steinbach's examples and this collection. Public, collective protests were by no means "silent" and achieved their impact only by attracting attention to scenes the regime did not wish others to see. When drawing on a segment of popular opinion among Germans, public protest was the form of opposition most likely to cause the regime to change its planned course on specific issues or methods. Although the SD documented the Witten protest in detail, not a single eyewitness is on record despite repeated requests made in the *Witten Frauen Geschichtswerkstaat*, which has been in publication for almost two decades. Silence about protests and notions that civil courage was "silent" rather than giving voice to open outcries may well have created a climate that hinders both open and half-open "admissions."

Renz's essay notes that, in the early postwar years, "lone fighters for the truth did not prevail" (p. 175). This important volume could have been strengthened by reminding its readers of the senses in which this statement still applies. As surely as we look back at the early postwar period as a time when various social and political interests intruded on discussions of "truth," others will look back on histories from our time with a similar critique. The difficulty of Elser's resistance in finding acceptance may perhaps have been due to Nazi propaganda, but it was more immediately conditioned by postwar interests, as Tuchel and Steinbach have written.

The clear admission of the current impact of interests today on the writing of resistance history fits well with recent understandings of the contin-

uing relevance of resistance history in creating civil societies, as Michael Geyer articulated soon after German unification: "resistance during the Nazi regime entails a call not to commemorate but to participate in the reformation of society."[5] Resistance history has the task, writes Tuchel, of continuously posing "always current questions" about the "possibilities and scope for action of individual persons in society," a mandate as challenging as any historians face (p. 19).

Notes

[1]. Jerry Z. Muller, "Us and Them: The Enduring Power of Ethnic Nationalism," ***Foreign Affairs*** 87 (2008): 18-35, writes that "the National Socialists who came to power in Germany in 1933 and based their movement around a 'Germanness' they defined in contrast to 'Jewishness' were an extreme version of a more common ethnonationalist trend."

[2]. "Steinbach: Stauffenberg darf kein Mythos werden," Deutschlandradio Kultur interview with Dieter Kassel, November 15, 2007, http://www.dradio.de/dkultur/sendungen/thema/696593/ (accessed on April 3, 2008).

[3]. Associated Press, "New Pope Defied Nazis As Teen During WWII," April 23, 2005, at www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/topics/new***pope***defied_nazis.htm (accessed on April 1, 2008).

[4]. Julie Torrie, "'If only family unity can be maintained': The Witten Protest and German Civilian Evacuations," ***German Studies Review*** 29 (2006): 347-366.

[5]. Michael Geyer, "Resistance as an Ongoing Project: Visions of Order, Obligations to Strangers, and Struggles for Civil Society, 1933-1990," in ***Resistance against the Third Reich, 1933-1990***, ed. Michael Geyer and John Boyer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), and "Resistance as Ongoing Project: Visions of Order, Obligations to Strangers, Struggles for Civil Society," ***Journal of Modern History*** 64 (1992): 217-241, at 217.

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