
Dr. Rupprecht Gerngross

On the meaning of the word 'Resistance'

Dr. Gerngross is the chairman of the Federation of Persecuted Democratic Organizations, based in Bavaria, Germany; he was a member of the resistance to the Nazis within Germany. The following are excerpts from his speech:

A. On the legitimacy of my critical treatment of the term "resistance," as well as of the actions of its activists:

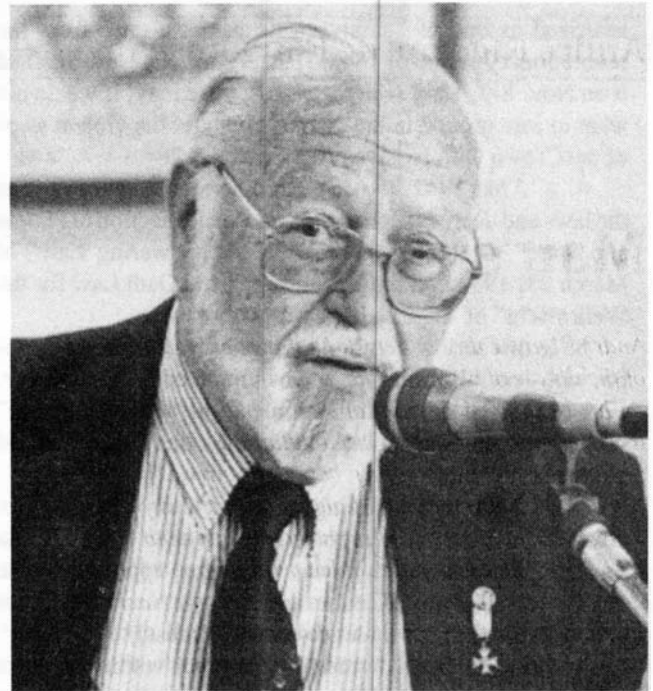
In Europe there was a wide spectrum of opposition against the Nazi dictatorship of Hitler, but only limited, generally recognizable, visible success with material effects or results. One such success was the uprising of the Bavarian Freedom Action of April 27, 1945, which I led under the widespread code name "Pheasant Hunt." According to official reports and publications, it was the only complete, politically organized, successful militant revolt against the Nazi dictatorship. I was at the time a reserve captain and head of the Translators Company VII in Munich.

B. 1. a. Clarification of the term "resistance" (*Widerstand* in Germany and *Résistance* in France) is important. The French resistance was resistance against oppression by an illegal dictatorship, on a national basis against a foreign ruling power. The German resistance aimed against the ruling regime under the dictator Hitler.

b. Nowadays, the word "resistance" is often used equivocally, for utterly different purposes; used, or, I want to emphasize, *abused*, in order to give weight to a protest action. The difference is made clear through the moral and ethical rules of the motivation behind the action. At most, in the "demos" of extremists and delinquents, there is no comparable action or methodologically related action with similar aims. As for the first, the resistance, it was a matter of a real fight against terror and lack of freedom, not against order as such. Thus the onus of illegality had to be taken into consideration. As for the other, with extremists and anarchists, it is a matter of protest statements, protected by a democratic environment, with its manifold legal, constitutional rights, with the aim of gaining public applause. . . .

'There is a limit to the tyrant's power'

3. a. Now I will say something in recollection of the unregenerated Nazis of yesterday, who today still place in doubt the right to resistance. In their evil-scarred times, the entire culture of freedom was suppressed, and even the children. For example, Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* was taken out of



Dr. Rupprecht Gerngross: "Schiller tells us: 'And if you do not put your life at risk, you will never have won life.' "

the school program and removed from theater repertoires. Stauffacher's words were not to be heard:

"No, the power of tyranny hath a limit,
When the oppressed nowhere can find law,
When the burden is no longer to be borne,
He reacheth up with confident courage to heaven,
And bringeth down to earth eternal rights
Which hang above inalienable
And indestructible as the stars themselves."

b. But with thoughts and poetry alone, nothing could be achieved. This we knew at the time. In a dictatorship, nothing could be done with democratic methods and means, plebiscites or leaflets and pamphlets. Nothing could be gained with silent opposition and a clenched fist in the pocket, either. There remains, nonetheless, respect for men who dared the extreme without any substantive prospect for success.

c. The various spiritual orientations, as well as social layers, the variety of political experience, had to flow together toward one single goal: the elimination of the Nazi system.

d. The resistance groups knew that in the fight against the terror of the dictatorship, they had the moral right to resort to the harsh instruments of the *raison d'état*.

e. Up until the time was ripe for the rebellion to be attempted, secret discussion and considerations in almost all circles focused on the subject, "Will there be another 'myth of the stab in the back' (*Dolchstosslegende*)?" and "Is tyrannicide justifiable?" The period of this discussion can be char-

acterized as one of “passive resistance,” a term from the revolutionary period of 1848. Hans Viktor von Unruh coined it on Nov. 8-9, 1848 with the words: “We may, if we do not want to lose ground in the country, counter the violent steps of the Crown with passive resistance only.”

4. a. After 1942, the original bitterness had ebbed over the laws and decrees such as the “Law on Protection of People and State” (March 28, 1933), the “Empowering Law” of March 23, 1933 and the “Swearing of the Oath Law for the Wehrmacht” of Aug. 2, 1934 was withdrawn.

b. In this period, there followed the creation of the Gestapo, with generalized spying and manipulated invisible terror. Fear dominated even within families. The “German glance” [cast suspiciously from one side to the other] characterized behavior in public.

The uncertainty regarding law was clearly perceived. In criminal law, the basic premise, *nulla poena sine lege* [no punishment without law], was no longer applied. People were deprived of their freedom arbitrarily in *Nacht und Nebel* actions [secret arrests under cover of darkness].

In 1934, the mass murders began, even within the ranks of rival factions around Hitler, between the militant-thinking SA and the trade union-like DAF (at the time called NSBO) under Ley, the so-called *Röhmputsch*. Injustice and brutality were cloaked under legal guise. Justice Minister Guertner coined the motto: “The will of the Führer is law.” Through this, the conscience of the law was shaken to the core. Once the defense minister accepted the fact that the murders of General von Schleicher and von Bredow would not be punished, then all trust was shattered. The Wehrmacht, though still a power, could have reacted, but remained silent! It allowed itself to be taken by surprise, with a new, unlawful loyalty oath. Whereas previously, one swore allegiance to “my people and fatherland, by God,” now one had to swear unconditional obedience to the Führer.

The loyalty oath

5. The problem of the loyalty oath was one of the fundamental decisions, particularly for soldiers in the resistance. Its consequence was that even committed opponents of National Socialism felt bound, particularly those who had a religious or traditional sense of duty. They could not go against the loyalty oath, regardless of the fact that the man they had sworn obedience to, had, from a formal-legal as well as historical-moral standpoint, repeatedly broken oaths (since Jan. 30, 1933) and had not only sanctioned murder, but had ordered people to be murdered.

It should be pointed out that this was not an “oath of truth before a court,” but rather the so-called “pledge to the flag” or “loyalty oath.” In the Germanic sense of the law, which the Nazis were so fond of appealing to, such oaths had a reciprocal character. Even the person to whom loyalty is sworn is bound to be loyal in turn.

Aside from the special case of Hitler, the “objective norms

of the power of an oath” and “unconditional obedience” toward the highest in command were discussed endlessly. This seems very formalistic and is almost impossible to render comprehensible especially to young people today. But, it was in the past, and it was in time of war! Remember Friedrich Schiller’s words, “Mars governed the hour” (*Wallenstein*).

The attempted assassination of Hitler

6. Tyrannicide—who will carry it out? The oath of loyalty—who will betray it? These are weighty psychological burdens which are hard to imagine. In fact, it is possible to establish, on the basis of military instructions, that even military obedience has its limits—particularly for the upper echelons—in decisions concerning matters of conscience and responsibility, and “broad concern for welfare.” . . .

It goes beyond the scope of this presentation to render homage to the attempt to kill Hitler on July 20, 1944, by the heroic von Stauffenberg. The attempt to save both people and state through inner freedom and peace is a monument in itself.

7. The bloodbath which followed the attempted assassination of Hitler was, given the morals and virtue of those who

Build resistance to the British new world order

Croatian journalist Srecko Jurdana sent the following message to the Schiller Institute’s conference:

We need a resistance movement today, just as we needed it during the ’40s. A civilized world mobilized during World War II in the common fight against Nazi totalitarianism, involving in this fight also the forces of communist totalitarianism which used the war victory of the Allies to establish an almost 50-year domination of communist dictatorship in Europe.

But at the moment when this dictatorship collapsed under accumulated internal pressures, the Soviet Union tore apart and the Berlin Wall fell, it turned out suddenly that, on the side of the World War II western Allies, there was no universal desire to break with communism and liberate Europe’s peoples. It turned out that the European order symbolized by the Berlin Wall has not been the exclusive product of Soviet aggressive expansionist Stalinism, against which the “democratic world” could do nothing, even with the best intentions (because of the danger of nuclear war), but this order, this inhuman “balance of power” in Europe, has equally been the product of this same “democratic world” that was nominally opposed to it.

rose up against the tyrant, a sadistic reaction. Himmler, who invented the notion of guilt by family relation, had entire families wiped out, in order to prevent feelings of vengeance from coming to the fore, and to establish a deterrent of insuperable dimensions, not to mention the concentration camps.

Considering such horrible memories, enumerable only in fragments, it is not appropriate to talk of Hitler and his crew as “satanic, diabolical, demonic”; they were simply base and vulgar.

8. Is an explanation still required to show that in the situation in which Europe as a whole found itself, only the participation of the military could offer a solution? Until the time was ripe, each had to deal with “damned duty” and conscience. It was only human trust which bound the activists, regardless of what their tendency. But they also knew: “Whoever puts himself in danger, loses his life.” This knowledge through experience was seized by Schiller, who tells us: “And if you do not put your life at risk, you will never have won life.”

The goal was clear: Hitler had to go. The White Rose [resistance group] was a sacrifice in this direction. The student groups had a fundamentally different form and also a different

spiritual background, than the political or religious organizations or the military in the resistance. Their intellectual, passive opposition was necessarily limited in its effectiveness, as they were far apart and isolated socially. Their predominantly literary statements were addressed to a minority with a similar spiritual background, that is, the “educated Christians,” so to speak. That was the “Platonic resistance.” Insofar as such action was unrealistic, because it had no mass effect, what remains is the symbolic character of their sacrifice.

Others went into “internal immigration.” The groupings from various political parties and associations, were soon victims of the Gestapo, and decisive actions capable of eliminating the Nazi regime could not be mounted. What remained, therefore, was only an attempt to overthrow the regime by violence.

Now, I have only to cite an evaluation of the resistance from Winston Churchill, that great hypocrite. . . . In 1936 in his book *Step by Step*, he said: “Not to criticize the current government, means, in a parliamentary country, to be out of fashion. To criticize it in a Nazi or communist state, means to be sent to a concentration camp, to prison or to the grave.” . . .

Only a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the imperial government in Britain and its agents in the United States instigated Serbia—this Nazi client from World War II, which had been proclaimed a British-French “ally” for tactical reasons—into its inhuman, genocidal attack on Croatia, which, as is well known, culminated in the destruction of Vukovar. The fall of Vukovar and the Serbian occupation of one-third of Croatia were politically prepared by Lord Carrington and Cyrus Vance. We know today that Vance, personally, together with the Serbs, entered Serbia, having given silent approval for genocide against the Croatian wounded and captives.

Carrington and Vance, these well-known “diplomats” and “gentlemen,” later secured through the U.N. and Unprofor the partition of Croatia, the withdrawal of Serbian armament into Bosnia, and the general Serbian attack on Bosnia, resulting in extreme genocide against Bosnian Muslims and in the occupation of the largest part of the nation. Through British-French intrigues, the joint actions of Lord Owen and Mitterrand’s governments, and Mitterrand personally, Serbian action with impunity in Bosnia had also been secured through the initiation of the Croatian-Muslim war, which was recently stopped by the intervention of the American administration and the Washington Agreement.

All this genocide in the Balkans started as a method of British control over continental Europe. For this purpose, a British-French “alliance” with respect to united Germany has been revived, including Serbia as a pseudo-ally of

the victors of World War II, and Russia, which, despite its deep internal crisis, has acted as a “superpower” in the Balkans in order to satisfy the British image of “balance of power” as the “only way to keep peace.”

We know very well that the British peace is a peace of the graveyard. Peace directed by Britain, or directed by the U.N., which is tending to become a “one-world” government, this is a peace without people and a peace without nation-states; this is the peace of a New Rome, where the caste of masters amuses itself with modern forms of televised decadence, built on the bodies of innumerable victims, killed—as a method of “removing social conflicts”—by the chosen pretorians.

The resistance movement today has to be aimed against the creators of this kind of “peace” and their pretorians, against the U.N. and oligarchical clique of “world government” obsessed with genocide, in the form of war or of abortion.

While the “democratic world” is paying most attention to the matrimonial problems of Prince Charles and Lady Di, outside its door, the hordes of New Age Mongols are committing—undisturbed—the most extreme crimes against humanity, and at the same time the “diplomats” from London and the U.N. assure us that these crimes are essential for the “balance of power.” Inspired by the Resistance movement against Nazism in the past, today we have to start a new, universal resistance movement against this “new world order,” even if it implies risks for our very lives.