

SOPHIE SCHOLL - the last days

A movie and its background

" Sophie Scholl - the last days" is a sensitive portrait of one of the few German heroines living during the darkest phase of German history: the movie shows the last six days (17th - 22nd of February 1943) of Sophie's life in *her* perspective.

Sophie Scholl had the admirable strength of a young, life-loving woman who would risk her own life for the idea of the "**white rose**". She and the other members of the White Rose became epitomes of moral courage because of their resistance to National Socialism and for a peaceful fight against despotism and oppression.

Conscience & Law

MOHR: Without law there's no order.

SOPHIE: the law you're referring to secured the free word before the seizure of power in 1933 and *now* under Hitler it punishes the free word with penitentiary or death.

What does that have to do with order?

MOHR: By what guidelines should you live if not the law. It's totally irrelevant who enacts it.

SOPHIE: You should live by your conscience!

MOHR: Oh no! As a criminalist it is my duty to scan if law and human are congruent and if not I have to find out where the problem lies.

SOPHIE: Law changes, the conscience doesn't.

MOHR: Where would we be if everybody decided for himself what's right or wrong?!

(...) why do you - so young that you are - take such risks for so bad ideals?

SOPHIE: Because of my conscience!

After her arrest Sophie is being questioned by the GESTAPO officer Mohr who knows that he doesn't have a main perpetrator sitting in front of him, but can't understand her motives of why "there's no way back" for her anymore.

Her motives lie only in her conscience and her knowing of the necessity of their resistance.

Representation of the figures

SOPHIE SCHOLL:

-Is proud of her work and would always do it again; ("there's no way back")

-doesn't reveal her comrades

-on the inside is terrified, but stands strong on the outside

-perseverance

-is pious

HANS SCHOLL:

- stands for the idea
- fights till the bitter end
- contradicted the judge
- his last words: "Freedom shall live!"

CHRISTOPH PROBST:

- is scared
- tries almost everything to escape death
- his last words: "It was worth it!"

SCHOLL PARENTS:

- raised their children to religious and political people
- they burst into court to defend their children
- are proud of Sophie and Hans and stand by their side

ELSE GEBEL (CELLMATE):

- wants to help Sophie
- should "watch" her
- is Sophie's only person to talk to during her last days

ROBERT MOHR (GESTAPO OFFICER):

- seems unreachable
- hot-tempered
- is impressed by Sophies courage
- gives her a chance to save herself
- starts to doubt his beliefs

Awards

"Sophie Scholl" got three german awards:

- "best film"
- "best maincharacter" (Julia Jentsch as Sophie)
- "movie of the year" audience award

also 3 european awards:

- "best european actress" (again Julia Jentsch)
- "best director" (Marc Rothemund) audience award
- "best european actress" (J.J.) audience award

Quotations

- "I admire her courage" (Director M.R.)
- "A movie can't change the world, but it can encourage" (Actor Alexander Held (Mohr))
- "Everyone carries the whole responsibility, but it is our duty to doubt someone and find a guideline to live after"

(Willi Graf in a letter to his sister; 6th of June 1942)

The WHITE ROSE - a resistance movement

Who or what was the white rose?

- A group of college students in the 3.Reich that fought National Socialism and were ready to die for their ideals
- They gave active resistance (e.g. in form of leaflets) to the Nazi-injustice-system

the members:

Sophie Scholl:

- born on May 9th 1921 in Forchtberg (in Baden-Wuerttemberg)
- started her biology and philosophy study in Munich in May 1942, after completing her training as a kindergartenteacher.
- arrest of Sophie and her brother on the 18th of february 1943 while spreading the 6th and last leaflet in Munich University
- sentenced to death on 43-02-22 by the president of the Volksgericht Roland Freisler
- Sophie Scholl, 21 years old was executed that same day, because she still stood up for her ideals

Hans Scholl:

- born Septembre 22nd 1918
- during his youth he was a member of the NSDAP
- met Alexander Schmorell, Christoph Probst and Willi Graf during his medicine study at MU formation of a resistancegroup in April 1939
- After deployment to the eastfront more engagement in the white rose he began his medicine study
- arrested with his sister in febraury 1943
- execution at the age of 24

Christoph Probst:

- born on 6th of Novembre 1919 in Murnau
- started his medical education at the MU in 1939
- married Hertha Dorn at the age of 21
- 1940 & 1941 birth of their sons
- 1943 birth of his daughter
- after the german defeat at Stalingrad he makes a leafletsketch wich Hans Scholl carries with him during the arrest
- arrest in Innsbruck on the 20th of february 1943
- two days later trial at the Volksgerichtshof
- sentenced to death eventhough he said he wrote the leaflet in a state of depression an that infact he is an unpolitical family-person
- executed the same day at the age of 23

Alexander Schmorell:

- born on 16th of septembre 1917 in Russia
- 1921 he moves to his german father in munich
- 1939 he beginns his medicine study
- there he meets Hans who later becomes his comrade

- helps with writing and publishing the six leaflets of the white rose
- tries to flee from the nazis and hide on the countryside after the Scholls arrest but is recognized and arrested on 24th of february
- sentenced to death on 19th of april together Willi Graf and Prof. Kurt Huber
- executed with the guillotine on 13th of june 1943 at the age of 25

Willi Graf:

- born on 2nd of january 1918
- opponent of the Nazi-regime since his youth because he could not put it together with christian morals
- knowing of four of Hans and Schmorells leaflets the medstudent decides to join the resistance
- arrest on 18th of february 1943
- sentenced to death on april 19th together with Alexander Schmorell and Prof- Kurt Huber
- more questionings, but he does not give the GESTAPO any names
- execution in Stadelheim on 12th of octobere 1943 at the age of 25

Prof. Kurt Huber:

- born 24th of octobere 1893
- got his doctrin in music at the age of 24 with 27 habilitation in psychology and philosophy
- february 1940 became a Professor for the NSDAP
- first contact with the core of the white rose a half year later he becomes a member
- After the defeat by Stalingrad he sketches the 6th and last leaflet
- arrest on 27th of february 1943
- sentenced to death on 19th of april 1943
- execution july 13th 1943 in Stadelheim

Of course there were more members of the white rose than shown here, but these persons build the core of the resistance.