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## The Tragedy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Hans von Dohnanyi

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*Dietrich Bonhoeffer with his twin sister Sabine in London, just after his return from America and before his final return to Germany, July 1939*

In January 1933, German conservatives, facing a political deadlock, engineered a way for Adolf Hitler, leader of Germany's largest political party, to become chancellor, with a predominantly conservative cabinet. They thought he would be their "captive"—the first of many fatal illusions that eased Hitler's path to power. Soon it was clear that his regime would eliminate all opposition and establish total control over what had been a politically and culturally diverse, if polarized, society. Giving their actions a deceptive veneer of legality, the Nazis enticed most of Germany's indispensable civil servants to collaborate with them—including teachers, professors, and judges—while relying on terror and murder to intimidate and silence any who resisted. The regime won great popular support, as ceaseless propaganda cunningly exploited the Nazis' successes at home and abroad.

To oppose such a regime was rare, and to do so in order to protect the sanctity of law and faith was rarer still. We are concerned here with two exceptional men who from the start of the Third Reich opposed the Nazi outrages: the scarcely known lawyer Hans von Dohnanyi and his brother-in-law, the well-known pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Dohnanyi recorded Nazi crimes, helped victims, did his best to sabotage Nazi policies, and eventually helped plot Hitler's removal; Bonhoeffer fought the Nazis' efforts to control the German Protestant churches. For both men the regime's treatment of Jews was of singular importance. Holocaust literature is vast and the literature on German resistance scant, yet the lives and deaths of the two men show us important links between them.

Dohnanyi and Bonhoeffer became close friends, especially after Dohnanyi drew his brother-in-law into active resistance against the regime. And their remarkable family deserves recognition, too, since its principled support was indispensable to their efforts. But Dohnanyi and Bonhoeffer ended in defeat: they were arrested in April 1943 and then murdered, on Hitler's express orders, just weeks before Hitler's suicide and Germany's surrender.<sup>1</sup>

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, born in 1906, was the youngest son of Dr. Karl Bonhoeffer and his wife, Paula, who had come to Berlin from Breslau with their eight children in 1912 when he became chief of psychiatry at Berlin's Charité Hospital. The parents raised their children with an impressive mixture of freedom and discipline, and the family stayed close as the second generation moved into vigorous adolescence and adulthood. Dietrich decided when he was fourteen that he would be a pastor, and his university studies served that end: he had his doctorate in theology by 1927. After working abroad—as vicar in a German church in Barcelona and then as a student at Union Theological Seminary in New York—he was ordained, but his passage to accredited church work ran up against the Nazis' determined campaign to unify the many parts of the German Evangelical Church in a single Reich church purged of what they called its Jewish elements.

At the beginning of this *Kirchenkampf*, Bonhoeffer wrote a controversial essay, "The Church and the Jewish Question."<sup>2</sup> Good Lutheran that he was, he conceded that the church was "neither to praise nor to censure the laws of the state," but it could and should ask whether a state action (e.g., vis-à-vis Jews) "can be justified as...legitimate." Moreover the church had an "unconditional obligation towards the victims of any ordering of society, even if they do not belong to the Christian community"; in any case a "baptized Jew is a member of our church." Further, the church must "not only bind up the wounds of those who have fallen beneath the wheel" of the state "but at times halt the wheel itself." No one else in the church was advancing such potentially subversive ideas. But then, all the Bonhoeffers had distrusted the Nazi movement from its start.

Seeing that the Nazis intended to impose their dogma—that race, not religion, determined one's civic identity—on the churches, Bonhoeffer joined other pastors in challenging the conservative-reactionary church leaders who acceded to this view. The dissidents organized themselves into what became known as the Confessing Church, which more than two thousand pastors joined, and Bonhoeffer alerted ecumenical organizations abroad to the Nazi threats. In 1935, he readily accepted a teaching position at a remote Pomeranian estate in a quasi-legitimate "preachers' seminary." He spent three years there, but went often to Berlin to see his parents—and to talk to his brother-in-law Hans, who was fighting the Nazis on different fronts.

Hans von Dohnanyi, born in 1902, a son of the Hungarian composer Ernst von Dohnanyi, had also grown up in Berlin and had

known the Bonhoeffer family since childhood; in 1925, he received his doctorate in law and married Dietrich's sister Christine. He was soon appointed to important posts in government and academic institutes, where he became known for his exceptional intellect and integrity. With his unconditional, patriotic support of the Weimar Republic, he was fervently outspoken in his democratic convictions.

In 1929 Dohnanyi entered the Reich Ministry of Justice as an aide to State Secretary Curt Jöel, a strict conservative of Jewish descent; in June 1933 he became assistant to Minister of Justice Franz Gürtner, a conservative non-Nazi lawyer whom Hitler kept on to reassure people that the "law" remained in non-Nazi hands. As Gürtner's chief assistant Hans was privy to information about the Nazis' crimes; by 1934 he was keeping a chronological record of them along with supporting documents; these were stored in an army safe at the Zossen military base near Berlin, Hans having been assured of its inviolability. He meant the documents to facilitate the prosecution of Nazi criminals after the end of the regime.

Hans knew that in November 1937 Hitler had presented to the army high command his secret plans to establish a new German-dominated order in Europe. After he got rid, by various vile means, of the top officers he found "unreliable" and presided over the *Anschluss* with Austria, his next target was Czechoslovakia, the one remaining democracy in Central Europe and militarily strong. Dohnanyi became close to the Wehrmacht officers who were appalled by the prospect of war over Czechoslovakia; they were determined to remove Hitler from power in order to avert his reckless adventure.

The leading figure in this effort was Chief of Staff Ludwig Beck, a patriot of high intelligence and great integrity; Hans also drew close to Colonel Hans Oster, who worked in the Abwehr—military counterintelligence—with its head, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris. These conspirators wanted to obtain assurances from Britain that a post-Hitler Germany would be treated generously. But the Anglo-French policy to appease Hitler went into high gear, and at Munich in September 1938 the Western powers virtually compelled the Czechs to surrender to Germany's demands. This triumph emboldened Hitler, and the regime became more and more violent: Would the Nazis have dared to give the orders for *Kristallnacht* in November 1938 if they had feared the Western powers? Hans and Dietrich were shaken that autumn night when synagogues burned, the churches remained silent, and 30,000 Jews were herded into concentration camps.

The Gestapo was now watching both men closely, if separately. (Gürtner had Dohnanyi appointed to Germany's highest court, thinking it safer for him than the justice ministry.) As the Confessing Church came under vigorous attack—more than eight hundred pastors had been arrested and jailed in 1937—Dietrich's sermons and his international contacts aroused Nazi suspicions. In January 1938 he was banned from public meetings in Berlin, but he continued to teach and guide his students in Pomerania.

When in March 1939 the Wehrmacht moved into Prague and Czechoslovakia was effectively destroyed, even the appeasers woke up. Resistance in the West stiffened, and it was resuscitated within Germany. Hitler's next target was Poland; everyone knew that attacking it would lead to European war.

Dietrich, embattled and frustrated, thought of going abroad, as he had in 1934 and 1935; perhaps some work in America might serve as a temporary alternative to military service—a dreaded, morally unacceptable prospect. His mentor Reinhold Niebuhr

arranged a job for him in New York, where he arrived in late June 1939. But at once he was in spiritual turmoil: How could he contemplate living in a foreign country, at peace, when his own country was on the brink of war and desolation? He decided he must go back to Europe, explaining to Niebuhr:

I must live through this difficult period of our national history with the Christian people of Germany.... Christians in Germany are going to face the terrible alternative of either willing the defeat of their nation in order that Christian civilization may survive, or willing the victory of their nation and thereby destroying our civilization. I know which of these alternatives I must choose.<sup>3</sup>

Few Germans even understood these alternatives, let alone risked making Dietrich's choice.

In August 1939, after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, which surely doomed Poland, Canaris summoned Dohnanyi to be Oster's deputy in the Abwehr, a position that exempted him from conscription. Hans did his official intelligence work but mostly helped Oster to organize a coup to remove—in fact to murder—Hitler. Part of Hans's task was also to bring ex-Socialist leaders into the circle, veterans of Nazi vengeance who were ready to accept positions in a post-Hitler regime.

With Canaris's help, Hans managed to claim Dietrich as an Abwehr liaison officer whose extensive ecumenical contacts could be useful for Germany. Thus Dietrich too became “indispensable in his present assignment” and saved from conscription. While he continued with pastoral and theological work, he now also joined Hans's band of conspirators in their oppositional strategies, and the friendship with Hans deepened as they faced common dangers, both of them relying on Hans's wife and Dietrich's sister Christine, who was a model of courage and ingenious decency. In a country awash with informers, where everything was under surveillance, the risks were clear. Any hint of treason or subversion brought instant punishment: jail, threats to their families, torture, death.

Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 was the beginning of organized barbarism such as Europe had never seen. The systematic murder of Jewish men, women, and children defied imagination, but Hans knew the reports were true, knew the Wehrmacht was shielding the atrocities from public knowledge while millions of Poles and Russians were also being killed or starved to death.

The men around Beck intensified their efforts. Hans was at the core of their plans, while Dietrich went to various neutral countries to meet with sympathetic churchmen who would take messages to the British government. They all realized that the crimes committed in Germany's name would burden that nation with inextinguishable guilt—and meanwhile millions of Germans were dying or wounded in war while their families suffered from ever greater bombing at home.

As German Jews began to be deported to the East and almost certain extinction there, Dohnanyi embarked on an extraordinary project to use his offices to save at least a few of them, including some to whom he had earlier promised protection. The complicated, desperate plan—it became known as Operation 7—involved having seven people whose names appeared on the deportation lists (the number grew to fourteen) designated as Abwehr agents and sent with the Gestapo's consent to Switzerland.

By September 1942 fourteen Jews had found safe haven, and were further helped by Hans's insistence that they receive funds to sustain themselves.

Both Hans and Dietrich had helped Jewish and "non-Aryan"<sup>4</sup> victims, but in 1941 Nazi policy changed from expulsion to extermination, and only an end to Nazi rule could save people. The Wannsee Conference of January 1942 coordinated the regime's plans for a "final solution."

In early March 1943 Dohnanyi and Canaris flew to Smolensk, Hans carrying a British-made bomb that a fellow conspirator, Colonel Henning von Tresckow, was to plant on the plane taking Hitler back from Russia to his East Prussian headquarters. Tresckow got the device on the plane disguised as two gift bottles of Cointreau, and the Führer departed, but the mechanism didn't work and Hitler arrived at his headquarters unscathed. On March 21 another assassination attempt miscarried because of last-minute changes in Hitler's plans. (Neither the SS nor the Gestapo knew of these two failed attempts on his life.)

Ten days later, what was to be the last gathering of the Bonhoeffer family occurred in Berlin—a celebration of Dr. Bonhoeffer's seventy-fifth birthday. Friends and colleagues raised their glasses, including Ferdinand Sauerbruch, Germany's most renowned surgeon and a colleague from the Charité, and Paula's cousin General Paul von Hase, now military commander of Berlin. A formal message arrived from Hitler awarding Dr. Bonhoeffer the Goethe Medal for Art and Science—a message that may have jolted the family, but then, they knew that Nazis honored and dishonored with equal abandon.

In truth, the Nazi chieftains' distrust of the German people had grown as they discovered and crushed various acts of resistance—like the brave effort made in 1942–1943 by the Munich student group called the White Rose—and they knew that the surrender of the decimated German army corps in Stalingrad in February 1943 had shaken morale. At that point they decided to strike at the "traitors" in the Abwehr. On April 3 Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel and SS Chief Heinrich Himmler placed the case against Dohnanyi and Bonhoeffer in the hands of a military prosecutor, Manfred Roeder (a favorite brute of Göring's), who on April 5 arrested Hans in his office while others arrested Christine and Dietrich, all on suspicion of treason as well as "currency violations." They were taken to different prisons in Berlin: Dohnanyi to the prison for officers on Lehrterstrasse, Dietrich to a military interrogation prison in Tegel, and Christine to the women's prison in Charlottenburg.

On April 23, Good Friday, Hans wrote to Dietrich—not knowing, of course, whether the letter would be delivered. His message was one of soul-searing regret:



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*Hans von Dohnanyi, circa 1940*

That I am responsible for you, Christel, the children, and the parents having to bear this pain, that my beloved wife and you are robbed of freedom—you won't believe how this depresses me.... If I knew that you all—and you personally—don't think of me with reproaches, a weight would be lifted from my soul.

Dietrich quickly reassured him:

There is not a grain of reproach or bitterness in me regarding what has happened to you and me. Such things come from God, and only Him. And I know that you and Christel are at one with me, that before Him there is only submission, endurance, patience—and gratitude.

On April 25, Easter Sunday, Christine, still in jail (she was released a week later), wrote a letter to her sons, Klaus and Christoph, which ended:

...Now I want to tell you one more thing. Don't carry any hate in your heart against the power that has done this to us. Don't fill your young souls with bitterness; that has its revenge and takes from you the most beautiful thing there is, trust... it is after all only a really small and meager part of the human being that one can put in jail.... I embrace all of you.

At first Dietrich was held in solitary confinement, but he, like Dohnanyi, still managed to stay in touch with family and friends through censored letters, coded or smuggled messages, and visits; the Bonhoeffers periodically brought them food, clean clothes, books, even flowers.

Over the first months, in lengthy interrogations—absent physical torture, but harsh and ugly—Roeder focused on how and why Dietrich had been exempted from an army call-up, the reasons for his many trips outside Germany, and his movements between Pomerania and Berlin—all were considered crimes. Dietrich confessed ignorance of the situations in which Roeder kept trying to place him, and mercifully Roeder paid little heed to his many brave anti-Nazi actions in the *Kirchenkampf*.

Though Dietrich kept to a strict regimen in order to maintain his energy for the nightmare sessions, he was profoundly depressed by the callous, foul-mouthed guards, the dirt and sweltering heat, the bleak efficiency with which the prison isolated its inmates, and by, as he wrote in a note to himself, his “separation from people, from work, from the past, from the future, from honor, from God...fading of memories...passing time—*killing* time...smoking and the emptiness of time.” But concentrating on the goal of clearing his name at an early trial and on mitigating the execrable prison routines—cheering up his fellow inmates and talking to the guards (several proved to be quite humane)—restored his inner equilibrium and gave him some kind of peace, as did his daily reading of the Psalter.

For Hans incarceration was a time of unspeakable suffering; he now experienced firsthand everything he had abhorred about the regime for ten dreadful years—the Nazis’ boundless criminality, their sadistic determination to destroy a person before killing him. Once Christine was released, she could give much-needed moral and practical support to him and her brother, but he was alone and without her, in danger, and ill. Yet while there was no let-up in Roeder’s brutal interrogations about Operation 7, Hans

outmaneuvered him, leading him into a bog of confusing technical details about currency transfers—all the while enduring streams of abuse, reminders that one of his grandfathers was Jewish, and threats of renewed imprisonment of his wife.

By midsummer 1943 Keitel conceded that the charges of high treason against both men should be dropped. Dietrich and Hans were finally shown their indictments—on the lesser charges of currency violations and a new Nazi high crime punishable by death: *Wehrkraftzersetzung*, “sedition and defeatism.”

They remained steadfast, and gave no names—ever. Yet there was the desolation of being at the mercy of their jailers, the deranging uncertainty of their situation, and the ever-present fear: might they break under torture? Of these inner ordeals we have some record: Dietrich’s famous letters from Tegel poignantly attest to the spiritual travail of incarceration; and there were the secret, coded messages both men composed with incredible ingenuity. Hans was in physical torment, with painful phlebitis, but despite confinement in a stifling cell with barely a glimpse of the outside, his resourcefulness gave him some relief: it was in prison that he taught himself to draw and paint, in prison that he drew the mad, twisted visage of Roeder, his touching portraits of Christine, and a nosegay of flowers for her birthday. He turned frequently to the Bible, his perhaps hitherto unarticulated faith fortifying him.

In November 1943, Allied air raids reached Lehrterstrasse and an incendiary bomb hit Hans’s cell; he suffered a brain embolism. His captors had no choice but to transfer him to the Charité, where he was put under the care of Ferdinand Sauerbruch, who repeatedly foiled Roeder’s efforts to return him to prison. But on January 21, 1944, in Sauerbruch’s absence, an army doctor and two SS men appeared at Hans’s bedside, rearrested him, and removed him to a military hospital. Roeder was taken off the Dohnanyi and Bonhoeffer case at this point, but the interrogations continued—now conducted by the only slightly less brutish Walther Huppenkothen, a Rhenish lawyer and SS officer, and F.X. Sonderegger from the Gestapo.

Dietrich used the solitude of his cell to study more deeply the many diverse texts he treasured; letters to his parents were filled with requests for books. In April 1944, he noted how different the jail experience felt to him after a year; he was working to grasp its inner sense and to use it for building strength and hope. He wrote more often to Eberhard Bethge, a former student and friend with whom he could share his theological reflections:

What keeps gnawing at me is the question, what is Christianity, or who is Christ actually for us today?

This fundamental question was at the heart of Dietrich’s musings. After experiencing the capitulation of German churches to Nazi demands, he might well have wanted to think about the Christian religion apart from its institutionalized presence in society, to explore what he called “religionless Christianity.”

In contrast to 1943, when Hans and Dietrich had hoped for a speedy resolution at an early trial, by 1944 a survival strategy required delay: they knew of the ongoing plan to topple the regime and they knew, too, of continued Allied successes, so they wanted to hang on until Hitler’s defeat—and their liberation. As Hans’s health improved he thought that only further illness would save him from the Gestapo; in May he begged his wife to obtain a means to infect him with diphtheria. The unflinching Christine did this,

poisoning some food she brought for him on one of her authorized visits. The ghastly ploy worked. Hans was taken to an army hospital for contagious diseases near Potsdam; though Huppenkothen continued his grilling there, he got nowhere.

In mid-July (after the Allied landings in Normandy), the authorities had to acknowledge that they lacked the evidence to bring either man to trial. But everything changed irredeemably on July 20, 1944, when Hitler survived the last and most nearly successful effort to assassinate him.

Bonhoeffer and Dohnanyi couldn't have known right away of the brutal aftermath of its failure—the murder that very night at army headquarters in Berlin of Generals Beck and Olbricht, of Claus von Stauffenberg, Werner von Haeften, and others. Oster was arrested the next day, Canaris on July 23. Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Himmler's deputy, was quickly appointed as head of a commission to hunt down every last suspect. Arrests and fiendish interrogations were followed by demeaning sham trials, many before Judge Roland Freisler in the People's Court, who screamed and hurled insults at the defendants. (There were moments of great courage, as when Hans-Bernd von Haeften calmly replied to Freisler's question about his motives, "Hitler was Evil's great perpetrator.") As many as six thousand people were rounded up, tried, and most of them executed, including General von Hase.

On August 22 Sonderegger ordered Hans's removal to the sickbay at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, where he also contracted scarlet fever, which together with the lingering diphtheria paralyzed his feet and legs. Heroically, he learned to feign that condition even after he improved. During those late-summer weeks, Dietrich and Hans could hope that they were at least safe from being implicated in the July 20 plot; their interrogators had no evidence linking them to it.

But on September 22 the Gestapo found some of the Zossen documents Hans had collected. Now his persecutors grasped his role in virtually every attempt since 1938 to overthrow the regime. On October 5 Huppenkothen stormed into Hans's sickroom and threw some photocopied documents on his bed: "Here we have what we have been seeking for two years!" Gestapo agents had concluded that Dohnanyi was "the spiritual head of the conspiracy" against Hitler.

Hitler was shown some of the Zossen papers and he lusted for revenge. He had probably always distrusted all these superior men and minds, these aristocrats with grand names and manners; now, consumed with rage, he wanted them disgraced, strangled, dead.

On October 8, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was moved from Tegel to the prison cellar at Gestapo headquarters on Berlin's Prinz-Albrecht-Straße, known as a place of ultimate terror, where in 1933 thousands of Socialists and Communists had been thrown into "protective custody" and tortured. Oster, Canaris, and others arrested after July 20 were among those already suffering for months in this fiendish place. Soon Dietrich's brother Klaus and another brother-in-law, Rüdiger Schleicher (both lawyers and both resisters), as well as Bethge were arrested and sent to the Lehrterstrasse prison, where Klaus was tortured.

On February 1, 1945, the long spring nightmare began. Dohnanyi, still partially paralyzed, was brought on a stretcher from Sachsenhausen to the Gestapo cellar. In the confusion caused by an air-raid alarm soon after, Dietrich miraculously managed to get to his cell for a brief conversation; Hans, in a letter to Christine smuggled out weeks later, made their resolute intentions clear: "[The prison commandant] is fishing for an anchor to the future...the only solution is to gain time." He remained adamant in his

interrogations. Asked for his motives in opposing National Socialism, he replied, “arbitrariness in matters of law, and National Socialist procedures in Jewish and church questions.” His guards had orders to abandon him, leaving him alone in his soiled bed for weeks, unable to move. Still, nothing broke him.

On February 2, Freisler sentenced Klaus Bonhoeffer and Rüdiger Schleicher to death. On February 3, Berlin endured its heaviest daytime bombardment yet; the People’s Court was in flames and the Central Security Office took a direct hit. Rüdiger Schleicher’s brother Rolf (a doctor), on his way to the People’s Court, was asked to help with a bloodied, possibly dead body in the courtyard: he could see that the person was indeed dead, and it was Freisler. A few days later the Bonhoeffer parents reached Prinz-Albrecht-Straße with a belated birthday present for Dietrich. But he had been taken from Berlin, no one knew where.

On March 8 Hans, utterly depleted, wrote to his wife, “They’ve discovered everything, absolutely everything. I cannot think who has betrayed us...and when all is said and done, I don’t care.” On March 19 he was moved to a prison hospital in Berlin, where Albrecht Tietze, a humane (and anti-Nazi) Wehrmacht doctor, restored some decency to his treatment and befriended him. They had many conversations, which Tietze thought of as Hans’s final legacy (*Vermächtnis*).

Dohnanyi said that he had realized all along that the regime was moving toward war and disaster and only a revolution could stop it, but “the obtuseness and cowardice of people of property and influence, and the stupidity of most officers, frustrated all efforts”; only intrepid workers and disciplined Socialists of the sort he had met in Sachsenhausen had it in themselves to be effective resisters—“idealists hardened by suffering” who might have given the resistance its ultimate promise for the future.

Dietrich had not wanted the meaning of his and Hans’s experiences to be lost. He had written to a younger friend:

We realize that the world is in God’s wrathful and merciful hands.... We learned too late that it is not the thought but readiness to take responsibility that is the mainspring of action. Your generation will relate thought and action in a new way.

The end was coming in different forms.

On April 5, Hitler was shown more Zossen files; enraged anew, he ordered the liquidation of the Canaris group, and in the chaos of impending defeat the Nazis indulged in a final spasm of murder. Tietze, told to transfer Dohnanyi back to Sachsenhausen, arranged for Christine to see her husband one last time, and then sedated Hans heavily. The next day, when his “trial” took place, Hans was still drugged and only intermittently conscious, thus spared the offense of having to participate in this travesty of justice with its foreordained verdict and sentence. On April 9 he was carried on a stretcher to the place of his execution and hanged.

Buchenwald was where Dietrich and other Gestapo prisoners had been taken. On April 3, as the guards heard the rumble of nearby American cannons, some of them took away a group of prisoners and drove them south to the concentration camp at Flossenbürg, where the Gestapo and SS had orders to obey and work to do no matter how close the enemy, how close their own defeat. Survivors of the macabre journey remembered Bonhoeffer’s calm, reassuring presence throughout.

On April 8 Huppenkothen and his wife arrived in Flossenbürg with other officials; a judge made his way by freight train and, for the last twelve miles, by bicycle. Some of the prisoners asked Dietrich for a short Sunday service; his homily was on a text from Isaiah: “With his wounds we are healed.” At the court-martial held that night by the bicyclist judge, Bonhoeffer, Canaris, Oster, and others were condemned to death; they were hanged early the next morning. Dietrich was composed to the last.

One truth we can affirm: Hitler had no greater, more courageous, and more admirable enemies than Hans von Dohnanyi and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Both men and those closest to them deserve to be remembered and honored. Dohnanyi summed up their work and spirit with apt simplicity when he said that they were “on the path that a decent person inevitably takes.” So few traveled that path—anywhere.

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#### 1. 1

This account is based on dozens of published sources and some interviews. Three books deserve special attention: Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Letters and Papers from Prison*, first English translation, 1953; revised and expanded in 1972; republished, with still more material and new editing provided principally by Christian Gremmels, John de Gruchy, and Victoria Barnett in Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Collected Works*, Vol. 8 (Fortress, 2010). Eberhardt Bethge’s *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*, first English translation, 1967; now available in a second revised edition, edited by Victoria Barnett, based on the seventh German edition (Fortress, 2000). Marikje Smid, *Hans von Dohnanyi, Christine Bonhoeffer: Eine Ehe im Widerstand gegen Hitler* [A Marriage in the Resistance to Hitler] (Munich: Gütersloher, 2002); this has not been translated into English. ↪

#### 2. 2

This extraordinary essay has often been dismissed as “anti-Semitic,” given its recognition of Luther’s well-known view that Jewish suffering was punishment for the Crucifixion (a doctrine to which Roman Catholics also adhered). ↪

#### 3. 3

Most works on Bonhoeffer cite this letter as Bonhoeffer’s own words; in fact, the text is that of Niebuhr’s effort, six years later, to set down his recollection of Bonhoeffer’s 1939 letter, which was lost. See “The Death of a Martyr,” *Christianity and Crisis*, June 25, 1945. ↪

#### 4. 4

In Nazi terminology, a non-Aryan was a baptized Christian of Jewish descent. ↪