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Wolfgang Benz and Walter H. Pehle, editors. *Encyclopedia of German Resistance to the Nazi Movement*. Translated by Lance W. Garmer. 354 pp. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1997. \$ 39.50 hardcover. ISBN 0-8264-0945-8.

The literature on the German resistance to Adolf Hitler's 'national-socialist' dictatorship runs to thousands of titles. They include diaries and letters, memoirs and other first-hand accounts, interrogation and trial records, besides a large and growing secondary literature. A bibliography exclusively covering the resistance which was published in 1984 has 6,231 entries; a bibliography covering all aspects of the era of National Socialism which was published in 1995 includes 1,179 titles on the resistance, not counting the literature on large related subjects such as the church struggle, and political exile.¹ Although the number of resisters was small in a population of some seventy million, there were hundreds of resistance groups, tens of thousands of individual resisters, many thousands of whom lost their lives on the guillotines and gallows, in prisons, and concentration in camps. Nevertheless, numerous episodes and persons engaged in resistance to National Socialism during the years 1933-1945 have remained relatively obscure. Even the best-known episode, that of the 20 July 1944 conspiracy, involved so many persons and is burdened with such complexities that a command of all the essential facts is difficult. Polls taken in West Germany between 1951 and 1985 indicate that most of the population was not familiar with any aspects of the resistance; in most cases when there was positive knowledge, it was fragmentary and vague. In East Germany the resistance which was rooted in ethical and political persuasions other than communistic ones was not even acknowledged as legitimate for several decades after the war. But both knowledge and approval of the German resistance to

National Socialism have increased overall, in Germany as well as in other countries. There has been a steady flow of publications, and in 1992 an American documentary film on the German resistance, "The Restless Conscience," was nominated for an *Oscar*.²

This Encyclopedia is therefore valuable as an overview of the German resistance. Part I contains 10 essays on Communist, Socialist, "Bourgeois," Christian, military, youth and women's resistance to National Socialism, and on resistance by the persecuted and by the exiled. Part II contains 63 shorter entries on resistance groups ranging through the political spectrum from left to right. Each entry is accompanied by a short selection of the relevant literature. Unfortunately, however, these bibliographic entries list almost always the German works from the original German edition even when there are English translations. Part III offers 550 biographies varying in length from two to a dozen lines. There is no cumulative or select bibliography.

An Encyclopedia of so multifaceted a phenomenon as resistance to Adolf Hitler's National Socialist dictatorship, compressed into 354 pages, necessarily cannot be free of omissions and regrettable brevity. This did not have to result, however, in uneven impartiality and accuracy in some of the survey articles in Part I, and in some of the shorter pieces in Part II. The lack of organized action by the Communists, Social Democrats, trade-unions or churches against the Hitler government at its very beginning, and the reasons for this absence of any organized response are obscured. E.g., the suggestion that the Communist Party considered the Social Democrats as the twin brothers of the Fascists and therefore would not cooperate with them is only half the story: The Social Democrats were committed to the democratic republic formed in 1919 ("Weimar Republic") which the Communists sought to destroy in aid of the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat, and the Communists also were directed by their masters in Moscow to attack the Social Democrats because these worked for reconciliation between

Germany and France, which was not in the interest of Soviet foreign policy.

There are unfortunate errors in some contributions, as in the entries on 'Assassination Attempts against Hitler' and on 'July 20, 1944' in Part II: The year of Gersdorff's assassination attempt is given as 1944 instead of the correct year 1943. Stauffenberg briefed Hitler on 15 July 1944 at 'Wolfschanze' headquarters near Rastenburg in East Prussia, not on 14 July 1944 at the 'Berghof' near Berchtesgaden. 'Alarms' (preliminary orders for the uprising) were issued in Berlin on 20 July 1944 before Stauffenberg's return from 'Wolfschanze' headquarters, not only afterward. The suggestion that Carl Goerdeler as Mayor of Leipzig had practiced 'unconditional cooperation with the National Socialists' (p. 173) misrepresents Goerdeler who engaged in constant obstructionism while in office, particularly in the matter of the National Socialists' anti-Jewish policy. The National Socialists in the Leipzig City Government took care to point out that this was the chief accusation against Goerdeler and the reason why his resignation in 1936 was accepted without regrets.

Almost nothing is to be found in the Encyclopedia on the positive program laid down in the proclamations which the military-conservative-socialist anti-Hitler insurrectionists of 20 July 1944 had prepared for broadcast on the day of the uprising. Instead, the reader is treated to Hans Mommsen's warmed-over criticism that the resisters were not committed to giving all power to a parliament and to political "pluralism." This critique fails to acknowledge the negative experience Germany had had with unrestrained "pluralism" in the years before 1933; the attempts of resistance groups such as Helmuth von Moltke's Kreisau group to propose safeguards against erratically shifting parliamentary majorities and against the alienation of the voters through an impersonal proportionate electoral system; it fails to recognize that the government of the insurrection most likely would not have had time, before the surrender and the Allied

occupation of Germany, to hold general elections; and the critique fails to take into account that in immediate elections a lot of Nazis would likely have been elected. The positions of resisters toward the persecution of the Jews receive varying, even contradictory attention by the several authors who refer to them. Some, as H. Graml, utilized the sources available on the subject, while others ignored them and merely reiterated biased judgments.

The 550 short biographical entries are intended to serve as an index. The editors acknowledge that of “approximately seven thousand resistance fighters and other persons who are known by name” only a small number -- 550 -- are listed in the Encyclopedia, and they assert that ‘it is not necessary to explain why all opponents of National Socialism are not honored individually’ (p. X). But in an Encyclopedia one might well expect more than a selection of approximately 8% of the whole, and the assertion that no explanation of this small selection was necessary is hardly illuminating. Only a fraction of the approximately two hundred who were executed for their part in the uprising of 20 July 1944 are listed. One finds Dietrich Bonhoeffer but not his brother Klaus, Otto John but not his brother Hans, Claus Stauffenberg but not his brother Berthold. One will find one foreign would-be assassin, the Swiss theology student Maurice Bavaud, but not another, David Frankfurter, who killed the Swiss National Socialist leader Wilhelm Gustloff in lieu of Hitler, and not Herschel Grynzpan who protested by assassinating a German embassy councillor in Paris in November 1938. One misses Walter Budeus among the Communists, and Max Habermann among the trade-union leaders. Ewald Heinrich von Kleist appears in an essay as one of those who were ready to assassinate Hitler (p. 122), but his name is not in the ‘index.’ Erich Fellgiebel, Eberhard Finckh, Kurt von Hammerstein, Caesar von Hofacker, Lothar Koenig, Heinrich von Lehndorff-Steinort, Hans-Ulrich von Oertzen, Erwin Planck, Alexis von Roenne, Ulrich von Schwerin-Schwanefeld,

Helmuth Stieff, Fritz Thiele do not appear in the biographical sketches. There is a rather obtrusive bias against 'bourgeois (national-conservative)' resisters.

On balance, however, the instructive value of this work outweighs its flaws.

1. Ulrich Cartarius, *Bibliographie "Widerstand"*, Munich, New York, London, Paris: K.G.Saur, 1984; Michael Ruck, *Bibliographie zum Nationalsozialismus*, Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1995.

2. Noelle and Neumann, *Jahrbuch der ffentlichen Meinung 1947-1955*, p. 138, 1957, pp. 144-5, 1957, pp. 144-5, 1965, p. 235; Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, Der 20. Juli 1944; Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach to the author 20 Nov. 1978; Allensbacher Archiv, IfD-Umfrage 4056; Large, *Contending with Hitler*; Nicosia and Stokes, *Germans Against Nazism*; Pejsa, *Matriarch of Conspiracy*; Sch`llgen, *A Conservative against Hitler*; "The Restless Conscience," documentary film by Hava Kohav Beller, 1992.