

chapter, or else begin a hunt through the three sections of bibliography at the end of the work. Not good.

Readers with the patience to put up with these problems and infelicities may find some reward, however. I found Corni's discussion of many topics both intelligent and informative. He has worthwhile discussions of German policy, the Judenräte, the Jewish police, economic, health and social issues, forced labor, ghetto liquidation, and Jewish resistance. He has a good grasp of the many-sided character of the history of the ghettos, and is widely attentive to the differences among different regions. Unfortunately, because of the many problems of presentation, I will be reluctant to recommend this work to students.

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Memories of Kreisau and the German Resistance. By Freya von Moltke. Translated by Julie M. Winter. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 2003. Pp. 87. \$ 49.95. ISBN 0-8032-4669-2.

The village Krzyzowa in Western Poland used to be Kreisau in the Prussian Province of Lower Silesia. It was allotted to Poland at the Potsdam Conference of July 1945. The designation "Kreisau Circle" was applied by the Security Office of the SS to the group of oppositionals to the Nazi regime who first met there on Pentecost 1942 at the landed estate of Count Helmuth James von Moltke. The group was in effect a braintrust of the German Resistance against Hitler. The literature on the Kreisau Circle is by now copious. The many memoranda of the group have been published, as well as Moltke's correspondence with his wife Freya. Furthermore, there are many secondary works on the circle, including biographies of the members of the group. The booklet under review is, as its title indicates, a memoir. Memoirs often present considerable problems to the historian inasmuch as they tend to be written from a personal, limited point of view. But this is definitely not the case here. On the contrary, the reader gets more than one insider's account of a historical phenomenon: the author reconstructs the dynamics of an extraordinary set of men and women united by their rejection of the evils of the regime in power and at the same time by their vision of a better Germany.

If the ground rule of politics is to exercise power, the Kreisau people violated it. They were up against an overwhelming power structure that they had no chance to match. They were prepared to meet the terror and violence of the Nazi regime "only" with their humaneness, their persistent faith in the righteousness of their cause, and their definite plans for Germany after the Third Reich. I might even argue that their mode of resistance came close to Mahatma

Gandhi's prescription of passive resistance. After all, Moltke himself rejected the option of assassinating the tyrant — to be sure, not out of fear or cowardice, but largely because he thought the evil was so intrinsic that merely removing one person at the helm would not suffice.

The basis of the group's meetings was friendship. Recruiting itself from various layers of society and religious and political traditions, it could rely on mutual trust and authentic patriotism. There was considerable strength in withstanding the faith in the "Führer's" invincibility that pervaded wartime Germany, and in actually planning for the "aftermath" besides expecting it.

The Kreisau meetings bore little resemblance to revolutionary underground plotting. As a matter of fact, they took place in broad daylight. Many members of the group, like Moltke himself, were in official positions that would offer them a temporary camouflage of sorts vis-à-vis the Nazi bloodhounds. Freya von Moltke could comment on the "inner freedom" that she experienced while preparing for the meetings. Providing food for some ten people in wartime of course called for careful planning. In any case, visitors were rewarded for their long trips with special Silesian poppy-seed *Stollen* that was generally appreciated. Indeed there prevailed in the get-togethers of Kreisau a great deal of conspiratorial laughter. And then there was Pastor Harold Poelchau, "a Mozart-type man" who was the guardian angel of them all as of many resisters who were in distress.

I have been wondering all along, how in the tightly censored world of Nazism the many letters between Helmuth and Freya could escape detection. To be sure, the many letters of Ambassador Ulrich von Hassell, another resistance leader, also got through; but in that case the fellow-plotters were protected, however slightly, by pseudonyms. But the Moltkes were protected by Kreisau's postal mistress and her son, the letter carrier, whose loyalty to the Moltke family protected them from scrutiny. So there were "niches" after all in the tightly controlled supposedly "totalitarian" society of the Third Reich. It was not over evidence about Kreisau that the members of the circle — Adolf Delp, Hans Bernd von Haeften, Helmuth von Moltke, Adolf Reichwein, Adam von Trott zu Solz, Peter Yorck von Wartenburg — were caught and executed. Much, from a scholarly and human perspective, is to be learned from this beautiful volume. Furthermore, it is encouraging to note that, quite in the spirit of the Moltke family, the whole estate of Kreisau, now Krzyzowa, has become a meeting place for Polish-German understanding, promising a better coexistence in Europe.

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