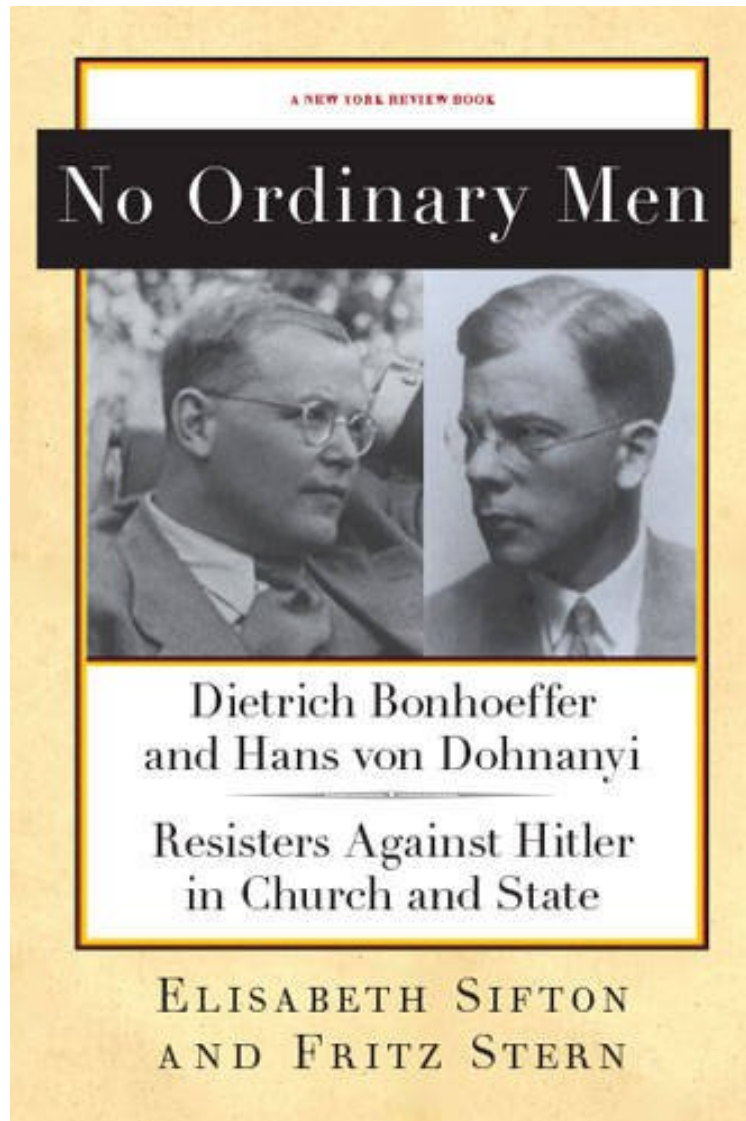


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No Ordinary Men: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Hans von Dohnanyi, Resisters Against Hitler in Church and State (New York Review Books Collections)

Fritz Stern, Elisabeth Sifton
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Fritz Stern, Elisabeth Sifton : No Ordinary Men: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Hans von Dohnanyi, Resisters Against Hitler in Church and State (New York Review Books Collections) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised No Ordinary Men: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Hans von

Dohnanyi, Resisters Against Hitler in Church and State (New York Review Books Collections):

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. A story of two exemplary men, who lived out their faith principles. By Mary Hartwig. Very well-researched. Some information was new to me, though I've read a great deal about Dietrich Bonhoeffer and family, and the tribulations they suffered during WW II. For example: Dohnanyi's wife contaminated food she brought him with diphtheria bacilli (at his request), so that he could be moved out of the prison to a hospital cell. It is humbling to read about a person of whom relatively little is known, and to see how he used his official position to help others in the face of grave danger to himself. Exemplary people, and a book that all of us would benefit from reading. Unlike the present-day betrayer of U.S. secrets, [who has done all he can to escape the consequences of his actions, and whom I consider a traitor], Dohnanyi accepted the retribution he knew would come to him, even though the punitive actions of the criminal Nazi machine were far worse than anything that would be handed down today. 28 of 30 people found the following review helpful. A brief but immensely rewarding book. By James Connelly. "No Ordinary Men" is brief; but its 150 pages vividly depict the related careers of two brothers-in-law, the well-known Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the lesser known Hans von Dohnanyi, in their courageous struggle against Nazi totalitarianism. It is hard to imagine how they kept to their righteous path through the temptations and terror and moral degeneracy that surrounded them as Germany foundered in the 1930s and 1940s. Yet they seemed to have seen themselves not as remarkable, but as men of ordinary decency. As the authors remark at the end of their study, "Though the world knows of Bonhoeffer in detail and hardly at all of Dohnanyi, they deserve to be remembered together. The Third Reich had no greater, more courageous, and more admirable enemies than they. Dohnanyi aptly summed up their work and spirit when he said they simply took 'the path that a decent person inevitably takes.' So few traveled that path -- anywhere." Quite a remarkable book. Very highly recommended. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. In fact, rather extraordinary men. By Reader. I have long wondered how the Nazis managed to squelch any criticism of their management of the national policies. Granted, here in the USA we speak, nay, shout our disapproval of politics and policies we don't agree with. But, could the Germans be so docile, so ignorant, so tame, they just said, "so what?" to everything that was changing in their daily lives? And yet, that is what occurred. They seemed to knuckle under rather easily. I have been exploring this question through quite a few books recently after reading Ambassador Dodd's diary. He was our last Ambassador to Germany before WWII and it is quite a frank book. So, it was a real pleasure to come to know the Bonhoeffer family and to see that they were not the type of family to simply acquiesce in behavior and policies they believed were inherently amoral. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a theologian, could not in good conscience remain quiet. That he lived as long as he did proves his international influence and the uneasiness within the Nazi regime. Perhaps they had a fear of just removing him. Hans von Dohnanyi, Dietrich's brother-in-law, decided to work from within, collecting and cataloging the atrocities he was seeing from the inside. Both worked quietly and behind the scenes to overthrow Hitler. Bonhoeffer's name is still remembered but unfortunately for history, Dohnanyi has never received the credit he deserves. Good research and good footnotes are an additional plum in this very good pie!

During the twelve years of Hitler's Third Reich, very few Germans took the risk of actively opposing his tyranny and terror, and fewer still did so to protect the sanctity of law and faith. In *No Ordinary Men*, Elisabeth Sifton and Fritz Stern focus on two remarkable, courageous men who did: the pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his close friend and brother-in-law Hans von Dohnanyi. They offer new insights into the fearsome difficulties that resistance entailed. (Not forgotten is Christine Bonhoeffer Dohnanyi, Hans's wife and Dietrich's sister, who was indispensable to them both.) From the start Bonhoeffer opposed the Nazi efforts to bend Germany's Protestant churches to Hitler's will, while Dohnanyi, a lawyer in the Justice Ministry and then in the Wehrmacht's counterintelligence section, helped victims, kept records of Nazi crimes to be used as evidence once the regime fell, and was an important figure in the various conspiracies to assassinate Hitler. The strength of their shared commitment to these undertakings and to the people they were helping endured even after their arrest in April 1943 and until, after great suffering, they were executed on Hitler's express orders in April 1945, just weeks before the Third Reich collapsed. Bonhoeffer's posthumously published *Letters and Papers from Prison* and other writings found a wide international audience, but Dohnanyi's work is scarcely known, though it was crucial to the resistance and he was the one who drew Bonhoeffer into the anti-Hitler plots. Sifton and Stern offer dramatic new details and interpretations in their account of the extraordinary efforts in which the two jointly engaged. *No Ordinary Men* honors both Bonhoeffer's human decency and his theological legacy, as well as Dohnanyi's preservation of the highest standard of civic virtue in an utterly corrupted state.

Sifton and Stern's chronicle is brief but deeply informed. And while Hans's name appears in most academic studies of the resistance, this new book is clearly written with a larger audience in mind. The prose conveys a sense of historical perspective but also, just below the surface, a compassion possibly born of the authors' own long-distance links to these men and their era. The Boston Globe. A story that needs to be heard. Library Journal. "A convincing argument that

theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his often overlooked brother-in-law Hans von Dohnanyi 'deserve to be remembered together' for their courageous resistance to Hitler's Nazi regime. A concise yet powerful contribution to an even larger history." Kirkus sPraise for Sterns prior works: Fritz Sterns pointed reflections [in *Five Germanys I Have Known*] upon the fragility of democratic liberties and the unpredictable ease with which they can wither and die should be required reading for every informed citizen. Tony Judt [*The Politics of Cultural Despair*] is a superb cultural history, erudite, thoughtful, imaginative, beautifully written. Klemens von Klemperer, professor emeritus of European history at Smith College No one has written better on the countrys rise and fall than Fritz Stern. Jackie Wullschlager, *Financial Times* Praise for Siftons *The Serenity Prayer*: A landmark work on the liberal ideals of the progressive American tradition, reaffirming their relevance for today.... A major contribution to the intellectual history of modernity. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. [An] ebullient and shrewd meditation on faith and social action. . . . A peaceable state of mind simply accompanies the reader as he ends this effortlessly elegant, uniformly sensible paeon to the human faith that Sifton inherited. Carlin Romano, *Philadelphia Inquirer* About the Author Elisabeth Sifton has been an editor and book publisher for many decades. She is the author of *The Serenity Prayer: Faith and Politics in Times of Peace and War* (2004), about the background to the famous prayer written by her father, Reinhold Niebuhr. Fritz Stern is University Professor Emeritus and the former provost of Columbia University, with which he has been associated since the 1940s. His many books include *The Politics of Cultural Despair* (1963), *Gold and Iron: Bismarck, Bleichrder, and the Building of the German Empire* (1977), *Einsteins German World* (1999), and *Five Germanys I Have Known* (2006).