

= My Opposition =

My Opposition (German : Mein Widerstand) is a diary secretly written by the German social democrat Friedrich Kellner (1885 ? 1970) during World War II to describe life under Nazi Germany and to expose the propaganda and the crimes of the Nazi dictatorship . It is considered one of the most comprehensive diaries of the period . The first entry in the 861 @-@ page diary is dated September 13 , 1939 , and the last entry is May 17 , 1945 . In 1968 Kellner gave the diary to his American grandson , Robert Scott Kellner , to translate into English and to bring it to the attention of the public .

The diary has been on exhibit in museums in America and Germany . The first exhibit was at the George Bush Presidential Library in April and May 2005 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day , which took place on May 8 , 1945 . The Holocaust Literature Research Unit at the University of Giessen in Germany has created the Kellner Project . The complete diary was published in 2011 by Wallstein Verlag in Göttingen , Germany . It is in two volumes , approximately 1 @,@ 200 pages , with over 70 illustrations and photographs . The title is , " Friedrich Kellner , ' Vernebelt , verdunkelt sind alle Hirne , ' Tagebücher 1939 @-@ 1945 . " (Literal translation : ' Clouded , darkened are all of the minds , ' Diaries 1939 @-@ 1945 .) A Canadian documentary film , My Opposition : The Diaries of Friedrich Kellner , was produced in 2006 , for distribution in 2007 .

= = Author = =

Friedrich Kellner was a justice inspector in the courthouse in Mainz between 1903 and 1933 . From 1914 until 1918 , he served as a soldier in the German army . When the First World War ended and Germany became a republic , Kellner became a political activist for the Social Democratic Party of Germany . For ten years , Kellner openly campaigned against the Nazis until they came to power in 1933 .

Once in power , Adolf Hitler soon banned the Social Democratic Party and other political organizations . Concerned for his family 's safety , Kellner moved to the town of Laubach in Hesse , where he became the chief justice inspector : the judicial officer in charge of the administration of the courthouse . When Hitler ordered the invasion of Poland in September 1939 , Kellner began his secret diary to record the crimes of the Third Reich .

After the war , Friedrich Kellner was made deputy mayor of Laubach . He dedicated himself to reestablishing the Social Democratic Party , and he became chairman of the Laubach branch . He retired from politics in 1960 , at the age of seventy @-@ five . In 1968 he gave the diary to his American grandson .

Using his grandfather 's writings to combat the resurgence of fascism and anti @-@ Semitism in the twenty @-@ first century , and to counter historical revisionists who would deny the Holocaust and other Nazi atrocities , Robert Scott Kellner wrote to the Iranian president , Mahmoud Ahmadinejad , who according to some sources has referred to the Holocaust as " a myth " and has called for Israel to be " wiped off the map , " to offer him a copy of the diary . In his letter to Ahmadinejad , Kellner wrote : " We need to renounce ideologies that do not uphold , above all else , human life and personal liberty . "

= = The diary = =

The diary , which Kellner titled Mein Widerstand , meaning My Opposition , is divided into ten volumes , with a total of 861 pages . There are 676 dated entries . The handwriting is in the Sütterlin script , a style of German lettering no longer in use . Included among the pages of the diary are more than 500 newspaper clippings ; a " collage effect " that enhances the diary 's historical significance .

The diary seldom deals with the Kellners ? personal lives , their daily tribulations and how they managed to survive during the war , although there are occasional entries to that effect , such as this one written on 20 March 1942 :

We were informed of the prospect of a shortening in food rations . 300 grams of meat or sausage per week . Once the Führer asserted he had the right to require sacrifices because he himself was ready to accept any personal sacrifice . If now the idea came into his head to starve to death , then I would not want to take away his right to ask all his fellow fighters to do the same .

= = = Call to arms = = =

In his diary Kellner focused on the broader sociological and political issues of Germany . On 21 January 1942 he reflected on the foolish choices the Germans had made following World War I ; electing Adolf Hitler and the National Socialists to power , and allowing Germany to become a totalitarian state :

Whoever looks in the past and thinks about the time of 1919 to 1932 will be overpowered by great pain in the face of the mistakes that have been made . When Hitler published his book *Mein Kampf* , it was time to begin the most stringent battle against the theories proposed in that book . Hitler proposed to do away with all present parties and institutions , even those brought about after centuries of sacrifices and great exertion . What would a man do if a thief announced a proposed break @-@ in ? Anybody would make security arrangements . And what did the government and the representatives of the people do ? As much as nothing . A tired , weak and sick population , as well as a weak government , let a charlatan of the worst sort promise them healing . For every problem this quack had the only right medicine . He alone possessed the magic wand that would uproot human weakness and produce angels .

Kellner 's diary takes to task not only the German people who elected Hitler , but the citizens and leaders of other nations who remained indifferent to evidence that dictators in Germany , Italy and Japan were plotting to take possession of the entire world . In a number of entries , Kellner accused politicians in the democracies of failing to stand up against the dictators . He pointed out that the world ' s intelligentsia , university professors and professionals in medicine and law , were willing to accept the National Socialist propaganda . ? The whole world let themselves be fooled by this man , ? he wrote on May 3 , 1942 . "

He especially could not understand how those who had defeated Germany in the First World War watched without protest as Germany rearmed itself . In an entry dated 12 November 1940 , he wrote :

Chamberlain and the entire subsequent government carries the blame not to have taken equivalent steps when they discovered Germany 's preparations for war . A world power must always be prepared to successfully and energetically repulse any attack . Everyone is certain that England was not sufficiently prepared . Also the fleet did not appear capable of taking decisive action . It 's possible that it was merely constraining itself , but that strategy is a mistake . It should have been put into action immediately . Neither in Africa nor in the Mediterranean has the English fleet rigorously counter @-@ attacked .

Also troubling to Kellner , aside from the Allies ' failure to prepare for the war , was their hesitation to enter the war with their full forces once it had begun . When Poland was attacked in 1939 , followed by attacks on Denmark , Norway , Belgium and France , Kellner looked to the United States to come to Europe 's aid . He could not understand why the United States acted so late to enter the war . On 25 June 1941 , a few days after Operation Barbarossa and six months before Japan 's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor , he wrote :

When will this insanity be brought to an end ? Now is a unique chance for England and America to take the initiative , but not only with empty promises and insufficient measures . If America had the will to throw its entire might into the fray , it could tip the balance for a return of peace . Only a tremendous force and the commitment of all war material can bring the German wild steer to reason . Up until now the statesmen , through unbelievable shortsightedness , have neglected or failed their duty . Mankind awake ! Attack together with all your might against the destroyers of peace ! No reflections , no resolutions , no speeches , no ? neutrality . ? Advance against the enemy of mankind !

In the same entry he angrily wrote :

Even today there are idiots in America who talk nonsense about some compromise with Germany under Adolf Hitler . Those are the most atrocious dummies .

= = = Record of atrocities = = =

In a number of entries , Kellner records atrocities being committed by the German soldiers . On 29 July 1941 he recorded what he learned of the deliberate execution of captured Russian soldiers in the prisoner @-@ of @-@ war camps :

The wounded soldiers in the field hospital in Giessen tell the story that Russian prisoners @-@ of @-@ war were also being murdered . Gruesome bandits . Are the German people a people of culture ? No ! A cultural people must be able to think as individuals and behave themselves properly . But the German people have repeatedly allowed themselves to be dictated to by their " infallible " Führer without participating in the slightest degree in their own destiny . The Führer is always right , the Führer never errs . The German people have been taken in by this devil .

And he denounced the German military for their policies against the resistance forces in the occupied lands . On 26 October 1941 he wrote :

In France two German officers have been shot by unknown murderers , in Nantes and Bordeaux . In retribution fifty citizens in each of these towns were apprehended and executed . To let people who are completely innocent suffer for the deed of another reminds us of the terrific deeds of wild beasts in times long gone . It was General von Stulpnagel 's lot to revive one of the most gruesome deeds . The world will rightfully be upset over so much inhumanity , and a hate will burn that can never be extinguished . . . How long will this reign of terror continue ?

Perhaps the single most important entry in the diary is dated October 28 , 1941 . After the war many Germans would insist they knew nothing at all about the Holocaust . More recently , Holocaust deniers have questioned the extent , and even the existence of the Holocaust . Friedrich Kellner 's diary counters such suggestions :

A soldier on vacation here said he witnessed a terrible atrocity in the occupied parts of Poland . He watched as naked Jewish men and women were placed in front of a long deep ditch and upon the order of the SS were shot by Ukrainians in the back of their heads and they fell into the ditch . Then the ditch was filled with dirt even as he could still hear screams coming from people still alive in the ditch . These inhuman atrocities were so terrible that some of the Ukrainians , who were used as tools , suffered nervous breakdowns . All the soldiers who had knowledge of these bestial actions of these Nazi sub @-@ humans were of the opinion that the German people should be shaking in their shoes because of the coming retribution . There is no punishment that would be hard enough to be applied to these Nazi beasts . Of course , when the retribution comes , the innocent will have to suffer along with them . But because ninety @-@ nine percent of the German population is guilty , directly or indirectly , for the present situation , we can only say that those who travel together will hang together .

Kellner also recorded the miscarriages of justice within Germany itself , where the Nazi 's disregard for laws and human life took its toll upon the citizenry . On 5 July 1941 he wrote this :

In Giessen , Forester Ritter was arrested because he said the war would last another three years . Two years ago R. was assassinated because he maintained that the war would last two years .

The truth may not be said .

= = = Results of totalitarianism = = =

Kellner was particularly incensed by the internal censorship laws . Censorship in Nazi Germany was implemented by the Minister of Propaganda , Joseph Goebbels . All media ? literature , music , newspapers , and radio broadcasts ? were censored , in an effort to reinforce Nazi power and to suppress opposing viewpoints and information . On 14 April 1943 , upon reading that the People 's Court of Justice in Vienna had imposed the death sentence on a man accused of listening to a non @-@ censored overseas radio broadcast , Kellner cut the article from the newspaper and wrote next to it :

Ten years in the penitentiary for a 'radio crime'. According to the newspaper that was too little for the chief justice. He sent back the verdict to the original court and demanded the death penalty. Just think: the death sentence for listening to a foreign broadcast on the radio. It cannot be imagined in the rest of the world that there would be given such a punishment for listening to a German broadcast on their radios. This horror regime has given itself a gruesome monument unto the distant time. Will there be retribution for this some day, Mr. Chief Justice?

Two months before the war's end, on 7 March 1945, when the Allied armies crossed the Rhine and entered German territory, Friedrich Kellner tried to explain why the German people themselves had not rebelled against Nazi rule, why it was necessary for outside forces to rid the Germans of the tyrannical government they themselves had voted into power.

The way that leads to the abyss for the German people has now come. The party patriots continue ever to believe and hope. Also, there are still those who do not want to see, and they expect a miracle from the Führer. Those are the kind of people who do not give up hope even at the edge of the grave. In all other respects, the number of peace seekers grows from hour to hour. The coming generations, and the foreign countries, will want to understand why the German people themselves did not turn against the party tyranny and stop the Nazi Party leaders by force in order to terminate this horrible war. For this, something should be said to clear up the question.

To begin with, the number of the party members is extremely large. Millions of people believed in the National Socialist philosophy; they were influenced by the broadcasts of the Führer and the detailed party propaganda. Individual thinking was switched off, and the party members allowed their leaders to set the guidelines in everything for them--and this spread throughout the entire population. In this way, more fanatics were created who were ready to use brute force, and other means of terror, to eliminate any internal resistance.

There is no important place in the government or private sector not occupied by proven party comrades. Adolf Hitler clearly announced before the seizure of power that the party would be running things. Thus, anywhere there might be a reaction against the party, a Hitler guard stands ready to quell that reaction.

Although today our opponents are at the Rhine and at the Oder, I do not believe yet that there will be a coup brought about by the German people. Without assistance from outside, such a coup is not even to be considered. Only the armed forces would be able to make a conclusive coup. But the prominent officers know, as well as the party officials, that a lost war will sweep them out of power. Therefore, the war continues until the possibility of it continuing any further is brought to an end. The Allies must continue to advance and fight until the German troops have no more ammunition and war material with which to offer resistance.

That is how I imagine it will end. The Allies must continue to use force in order to terminate the war.

= = Reception of the diary = =

Museum exhibits

April - May 2005 : George Bush Presidential Library and Museum in College Station, Texas to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day.

September 2005 : Laubach Heimat Museum, Laubach, Germany. In 2007 this was made a permanent exhibit of diary facsimiles and historical photographs.

May - August 2006 : Holocaust Museum Houston in Texas.

October 2007 : The Great Synagogue of Stockholm, in Stockholm, Sweden.

November 10, 2008 : Dag Hammarskjöld Library, United Nations Headquarters in New York

December 2009 - January 2010 : Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Berlin, Germany

May - December 2010 : Dwight Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum in Abilene, Kansas, as part of the exhibit "Eisenhower and the Righteous Cause: The Liberation of Europe."

Museum and library offers to house the diary

Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights , to be built in 2012 .

Purdue University

Columbia University

Stanford University , Hoover Institute

University of Texas at Austin

Publishing the diary The complete diary was published by Wallstein Verlag (on German Wikipedia) in Göttingen , Germany , in 2011 . It consists of two volumes , approximately 1 @, @ 200 pages , with over 70 illustrations and photographs . The title is " Friedrich Kellner , ' Vernebelt , verdunkelt sind alle Hirne , ' Tagebücher 1939 @-@ 1945 . "

= = Documentary film = =

CCI Entertainment , a Canadian film company , produced a documentary film entitled , My Opposition : The Diaries of Friedrich Kellner , which interweaves the stories of Kellner and his American grandson , using reenactments , photographs , and archival footage . During parts of the documentary , an actor reads diary entries that relate to the historic narrative of the film , and the camera scans pages of the diary . The film was broadcast on prime @-@ time television in Canada in 2007 . It was screened in November 2008 at the Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium at United Nations Headquarters in New York in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht . In October 2009 , it was screened in Israel at the Jewish Eye Film Festival .