

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich

(1906--1945), German Protestant theologian who opposed the Nazis. Despite the fact that Bonhoeffer came from a Christian tradition that viewed the Jews as a cursed people, he saw how poisonous and extreme the Nazis were. Thus, in 1933 he became a frank critic of the "German Christian" section of the German Evangelical Church, which supported Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. Because of his opposition to the government, his church decided to get him out of harm's way; they sent him to England to be a chaplain in the German church in south London. He served there until 1935, but was then asked to return to train ordination candidates for the anti-Nazi Confessing Church. This work was illegal, and it was put to an end by the Gestapo in 1938.

During the war Bonhoeffer supported the German resistance movement. Several members of his immediately family were directly involved in resisting the Nazis, and some were later executed for their activities. Bonhoeffer was arrested in April 1943, and imprisoned in Berlin. He was executed at the Flossenburg concentration camp in April 1945