



Resistance of the Heart: Intermarriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany

Nathan Stoltzfus

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In February 1943 the Gestapo arrested approximately 10,000 Jews remaining in Berlin. Most died at Auschwitz. Two thousand of those Jews, however, had non-Jewish partners and were locked into a collection center on a street called Rosenstrasse. As news of the surprise arrest pulsed through the city, hundreds of Gentile spouses, mostly women, hurried to the Rosenstrasse in protest. A chant broke out: **"Give us our husbands back."**

Over the course of a week protesters vied with the Gestapo for control of the street. Now and again armed SS guards sent the women scrambling for cover with threats that they would shoot. After a week the Gestapo released these Jews, almost all of whom survived the war.

The Rosenstrasse Protest was the triumphant climax of ten years of resistance by intermarried couples to Nazi efforts to destroy their families. In fact, ninety-eight percent of German Jews who did not go into hiding and who survived Nazism lived in mixed marriages. Why did Hitler give in to the protesters? Using interviews with survivors and thousands of Nazi records never before examined in detail, Nathan Stoltzfus identifies the power of a special type of resistance--the determination to risk one's own life for the life of loved ones. A "resistance of the heart..."

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