

Werner Finck (1902-1978) was the founder and creative nexus of the Berlin cabaret The Catacombs (Die Katakombe), which took aim at Hitler with satirical performances—until it was banned. After a six-week internment in a concentration camp in 1935 and a new ban on his performances, Goebbels' "favorite enemy" escaped into the "gray cloth" by joining the army in 1939. After the war, he started the Munich Grinners College (Schmunzelkolleg) and in 1948 the Mousetrap (Mausefalle) in Stuttgart, and into the 1970s he toured with his solo programs. Bert Brecht dedicated his poem "Eulenspiegel Survives the War" to him ("Eulenspiegel überlebt den Krieg"). With stuttering punch lines, the master of the unfinished sentence became an important rejuvenator of the topical, satirical cabaret, while giving it a philosophical dimension as well.

Werner Finck

"In his commentaries were hidden the concentration camps, the home searches, the general fear, the general mendacity. His mockery of all this had something incredibly soft-spoken about it, something melancholy and sad - and it had a unusual power of consolation." (Sebastian Haffner, 1933)

