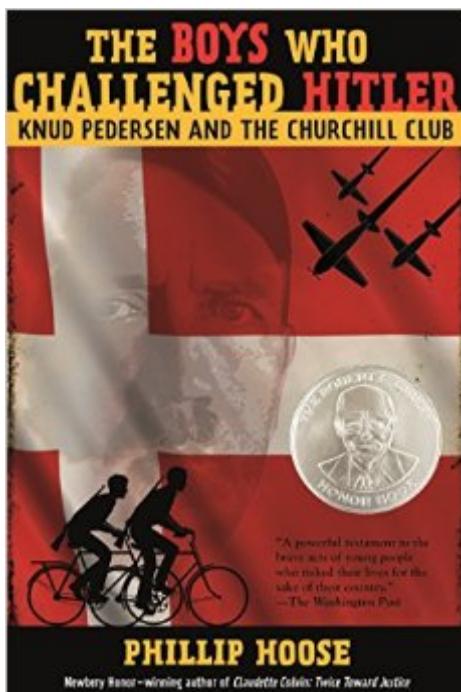


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The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Pedersen And The Churchill Club (Bccb Blue Ribbon Nonfiction Book Award (Awards))



Synopsis

At the outset of World War II, Denmark did not resist German occupation. Deeply ashamed of his nation's leaders, fifteen-year-old Knud Pedersen resolved with his brother and a handful of schoolmates to take action against the Nazis if the adults would not. Naming their secret club after the fiery British leader, the young patriots in the Churchill Club committed countless acts of sabotage, infuriating the Germans, who eventually had the boys tracked down and arrested. But their efforts were not in vain: the boys' exploits and eventual imprisonment helped spark a full-blown Danish resistance. Interweaving his own narrative with the recollections of Knud himself, here is Phillip Hoose's inspiring story of these young war heroes. This thoroughly-researched and documented book can be worked into multiple aspects of the common core curriculum.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Customer Reviews

In this wonderful piece of narrative nonfiction, Hoose brings us the experience of Knud Pedersen in his own words. As a Dane, the teenaged Pedersen was perturbed that his government had caved so easily to the Nazis demands, agreeing to cooperate with the Nazi soldiers in exchange for relative safety. While Norway was fighting the Nazis, it took a while before opposition to the Nazis took hold in Denmark, and that opposition was started by a group of teenagers headed by

Pedersen. At first, the boys contented themselves with painting graffiti and doing small amounts of damage to Nazi property, but soon escalated to major acts of arson as well as stealing weapons and accumulating quite an arsenal. When the Danish people saw that not everyone was acquiescing to Nazi demands, the Resistance was able to take off. The Churchill Club, as the group called itself, continued to bedevil the Nazis, although the boys found it difficult to think about actually killing the soldiers. Eventually, the group was found out and arrested, and spent a lot of time in various jails. By this point, however, the Resistance was going full force. Luckily for the boys, they were tried by Danish officials and, in part because of their age, were not sentenced to death. Many readers want to know all there is to know about World War II, and this is an absorbing read that hits close to home. Read it with Jablonski's graphic novel series about the French Resistance (Resistance, Defiance, Victory), Preus' Norwegian Resistance novel, Shadow on the Mountain, or the Couloumbis' War Games, which centers on the Greek Resistance.

Insufficiently balanced in viewpoints, misleadingly oversimplified, the author takes the side of then teenage resisters as if their (natural for teens) viewpoint is the only view with truths; as if their view was truth with a capital T. I was born in Denmark, of American teacher parents; several family friends were in the Danish resistance. -Other acclaimed books on the Danish Resistance, such as Hitler's Savage Canary by David Lampe, (the several types of Resistance) and A Conspiracy of Decency (Danish rescue of most Danish Jews, an effort by many Danes and surprisingly even by a few Germans) by Emmy Werner, while very much on the side of being and becoming Resisters, (as I am too) also understand (as Philip Hoose and his sole source: Knud Pederson do not), the very practical, good management the Danish government did in the early years of the war, saving many many lives, and keeping as much Danish autonomy as they could. The Danes and the Germans each, in a modern term, tried to "Spin" each other, Danes angling for as much independence as could, while resistance built, until, also naturally by August 1943 the Germans had become way too much to take, a huge strike by most of Copenhagen broke out, the Germans-Nazis then reacted by taking over what there was of Danish government, tried to arrest all 9,000 Danish policemen, and so on; and the Danish Resistance became very much stronger. The author and his then-teens (as would be natural for teens -but author as an historian has an obligation to understand and share more than one pov), judgemental put down of the Danes in 1940 having surrendered in one day, April 9, rather than gone on as Norway did for several more weeks/ several months of active resistance until being defeated and taken over.

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