

1: The History Place - Defeat of Hitler: Attack on Russia

German resistance to Nazism (German: Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus) was the opposition by individuals and groups in Germany to the National Socialist regime between and

Share Shares 1K The common belief is that Adolf Hitler and the Nazis ruled Germany with an iron fist, crushing any rebellion or dissent with swift fury. However, there were a number of groups active in Germany that were trying to take down the Nazis. Mostly comprised of teenagers between the ages of 14 and 18, they had no central leader and were only loosely affiliated with the groups in other cities – sometimes, the only common factor was the Edelweiss flower badge which they all wore. As the war dragged on, the Edelweiss Pirates performed increasingly dangerous tasks, including sabotage against German railways and aiding Jews fleeing from the Nazis. German reprisals were varied, depending on the severity of the crime, but many were sent to camps or prisons, with some even being executed. When the war ended, many of them disbanded, but a few continued, turning their attentions to the Allied troops who now occupied Germany. They were youth who enjoyed American swing music, something the Nazis detested. Though not very political at the beginning, the Swing Kids were said to have begun spreading the truth heard from the Allies to German citizens. However, most of their protests seemed to be in the form of petty crime or vandalism. In addition, many of the group members began to non-violently protest other aspects of Nazi rule, with some even going on to join other more political groups like the White Rose. After , the Nazis began to crack down on the swing clubs, sending many of the children to concentration camps. However, Elser is part of a select group of people who tried to do it alone. Every year, the Nazis would meet at the Beer Hall Putsch, to commemorate the failed overthrow of the German government that landed a younger Hitler in jail. Elser knew this and used it to his advantage. Ten months before Hitler was going to give his annual speech on November 8, , Elser began scouting out the area. For months, Elser worked, hollowing out a stone pillar behind where Hitler would stand, so a bomb could be placed inside of it. He created a timer that would last for hours and set it for 9: Unfortunately, Hitler changed his plans at the last minute because of weather problems and ended 30 minutes early, escaping unharmed. Elser was arrested and imprisoned until April , when he was executed. Founded in Berlin in , the group began under the leadership of Robert Havemann, a chemist, and Georg Groscurth, a doctor. The European Union produced many leaflets during the war, as well as providing aid and information to Allied Forces and those hunted by the Nazis. However, they never actively tried to take down the government because they felt it would collapse on its own. What they wanted to do was create a unified, socialist Europe. Paul Hatschek, one of the leading members, was captured by the Gestapo in and ratted out nearly every person in the group, with at least 15 of them being killed. The group was led by a group of year-olds who had become disillusioned with what Hitler had turned Germany into. Many of the leaders were ex-Hitler Youth. The White Rose became quite popular, especially among college students, and various offshoots popped up in different towns. Three of the founders, Hans and Sophie Scholl and Christoph Probst, were eventually betrayed to the Nazis by a janitor at their university and executed on February 22, . Afterward, the White Rose movement fell apart, though almost no one else was caught. Established by Johanna Solf, the widow of a German ambassador, the group would routinely meet to discuss their plans to aid the Jews Solf and her daughter helped hide a number of Jews and assisted their escape from the country. On September 10, at a birthday party for Elisabeth von Thadden a famous Protestant headmistress at a nearby school , a secret Gestapo agent was unknowingly invited by one of the members and he reported their actions. Nearly everyone was rounded up, arrested, tried, and executed. Aided by the fact that nearly half of all Germans were Catholic, the Church was able to effectively convince Hitler to abandon the project because he feared having to fight them while he was fighting a war on two fronts. Seemingly faced with death each night at the hands of the guards they marched in front of, they persisted, until Hitler released the prisoners, even those already sent to Auschwitz. What if the rest of Germany had stood up to Hitler? Said to be one of the main centers of the German resistance movement, their goal was to figure out how to establish a peaceful, Christian Germany, after the war was lost. For them, it was difficult to reconcile their hatred toward Hitler and the Nazis and their patriotic love for

Germany. The group was known for spreading information to the Allies, as well as other resistance groups within Germany. Later in the war, some of the members were involved in a failed assassination of Adolf Hitler the one portrayed in the movie Valkyrie and many of the Kreisau Circle were arrested and executed, even those who had no part in the coup attempt. Named after Harro Schulze-Boysen the Luftwaffe staff officer who founded it and his friends, one of their goals was to gather intelligence for the Allies and help those hunted by the Nazis to get to freedom. However, their primary goal was to incite civil disobedience by distributing a number of leaflets, as well as causing the Nazis grief through the specter of subversion groups. In , after Gestapo agents intercepted some of their radio transmissions, nearly all of the members of the group were arrested and executed.

2: German Resistance to Hitler and Nazis Within Germany - Valkyrie Conspiracy

Resistance Within Germany Against Hitler and the Nazis Most people are surprised to hear that there were Germans who opposed and even rose up in rebellion against Hitler.

Hitler managed to maintain a posture of legality throughout the Nazification process. Domestically, during the next six years, Hitler completely transformed Germany into a police state. Germany steadily began rearmament of its military, in violation of the Treaty of Versailles. Internationally, Hitler engaged in a "diplomatic revolution" by skillfully negotiating with other European countries and publicly expressing his strong desire for peace. Starting in 1933, Hitler began his aggressive quest for Lebensraum, or more living space. Britain, France, and Russia did not want to enter into war and their collective diplomatic stance was to appease the bully Germany. Without engaging in war, Germany was able to annex neighboring Austria and carve up Czechoslovakia. In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Britain and France had no choice but to declare war on Germany. World War II had begun. On February 27, 1933, the Reichstag building went up in flames. Nazis immediately claimed that this was the beginning of a Communist revolution. This fact leads many historians to believe that Nazis actually set, or help set the fire. Others believe that a deranged Dutch Communist set the fire. The issue has never been resolved. This incident prompted Hitler to convince Hindenburg to issue a Decree for the Protection of People and State that granted Nazis sweeping power to deal with the so-called emergency. This laid the foundation for a police state. This site covers the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor and the political infighting leading up to that event. The Reichstag fire and the ensuing emergency decree restricting personal liberties are discussed. The Nazis began arresting Communists, Socialists, and labor leaders. Dachau became a training center for concentration camp guards and later commandants who were taught terror tactics to dehumanize their prisoners. Parliamentary democracy ended with the Reichstag passage of the Enabling Act, which allowed the government to issue laws without the Reichstag. As part of a policy of internal coordination, the Nazis created Special Courts to punish political dissent. In a parallel move from April to October, the regime passed civil laws that barred Jews from holding positions in the civil service, in legal and medical professions, and in teaching and university positions. The Nazis encouraged boycotts of Jewish-owned shops and businesses and began book burnings of writings by Jews and by others not approved by the Reich. The American Response" by Guy Stern. Nazi antisemitic legislation and propaganda against "Non-Aryans" was a thinly disguised attack against anyone who had Jewish parents or grandparents. Jews felt increasingly isolated from the rest of German society. In early 1934, there were 2. Hitler knew that the regular army opposed the SA becoming its core. Fearing the power of the regular army to force him from office, Hitler curried their favor by attacking the leadership of the SA in the "Night of the Long Knives. On August 2, 1934, President Hindenburg died. Hitler announced the Nuremberg Laws in 1935. These laws stripped Jews of their civil rights as German citizens and separated them from Germans legally, socially, and politically. This law forbade marriages or sexual relations between Jews and Germans. Hitler warned darkly that if this law did not resolve the problem, he would turn to the Nazi Party for a final solution. More than laws, decrees, and ordinances were enacted after the Nuremberg Laws and before the outbreak of World War II, further eroding the rights of German Jews. Many thousands of Germans who had not previously considered themselves Jews found themselves defined as "non-Aryans. Jump to the Resource section to view photos of the Third Reich from including book burnings, Hitler, and Hitler Youth. In 1936, Berlin hosted the Olympics. Hitler viewed this as a perfect opportunity to promote a favorable image of Nazism to the world. Monumental stadiums and other Olympic facilities were constructed as Nazi showpieces. Leni Riefenstahl was commissioned to create a film, Olympia, for the purpose of Nazi propaganda. Some have called her previous film in 1935, Triumph of the Will, one of the great propaganda pieces of the century. In it, she portrayed Hitler as a god. International political unrest preceded the games. It was questioned whether the Nazi regime could really accept the terms of the Olympic Charter of participation unrestricted by class, creed, or race. There were calls for a U. The Nazis guaranteed that they would allow German Jews to participate. The boycott did not occur. The great irony of these Olympics was that, in the land of "Aryan superiority," it was Jesse Owens, the African-American track

star, who was the undisputed hero of the games. The Resource section offers photos from the Berlin Olympics showing street decorations, the arrival of the US team, and the Olympic stadium. This Resource gallery consists of recent photos showing the Olympic stadium in Berlin. Recent photos of sculptures on the grounds of the Olympic stadium in Berlin. The Anschluss occurred with the overwhelming approval of the Austrian people. No countries protested this violation of the Treaty of Versailles. In September, Hitler eyed the northwestern area of Czechoslovakia, called the Sudetenland, which had three million German-speaking citizens. Hitler did not want to march into the Sudetenland until he was certain that France and Britain would not intervene. First, he met with British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and threatened to go to war if he did not receive the territory. The Western powers chose appeasement rather than military confrontation. Germany occupied the Sudetenland on October 15. These photographs show the German annexation of the Sudetenland. In Germany, open antisemitism became increasingly accepted, climaxing in the "Night of Broken Glass" Kristallnacht on November 9. Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels initiated this free-for-all against the Jews, during which nearly 1,000 synagogues were set on fire and 76 were destroyed. More than 7,000 Jewish businesses and homes were looted, about one hundred Jews were killed and as many as 30,000 Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps to be tormented, many for months. Within days, the Nazis forced the Jews to transfer their businesses to Aryan hands and expelled all Jewish pupils from public schools. With brazen arrogance, the Nazis further persecuted the Jews by forcing them to pay for the damages of Kristallnacht. This Nazi order instigated Kristallnacht "measures. Movie clip documenting the violence of Kristallnacht. An extended article on Kristallnacht including an introduction, fact sheet, personal profiles, documents, eyewitness accounts, and an epilogue. Two days later, Britain and France, now obliged by treaty to help Poland, declared war on Germany. Before British and French power could be brought to bear, in less than four weeks, Poland collapsed. These photographs document the invasion of Poland and the Nazi mistreatment of Polish Jews. This discussion of Nazi Germany from covers euthanasia, Aryanization, and Kristallnacht. Interactive quiz on the Nazification of Germany Lesson plans, discussion questions, term paper topics, reproducible handouts, and other resources for teaching about the Nazification of Germany are available here.

3: German Resistance to Nazism | Military Wiki | FANDOM powered by Wikia

The German Teens Who Rebelled Against Hitler. BY Jake Rossen. June 9, NSDOK. But not all of Germany's adolescents were willing to be subordinates to Hitler's cause. A small but.

Bring fact-checked results to the top of your browser search. Conditions were ripe for the development of such a party. Resentment at the loss of the war and the severity of the peace terms added to the economic woes and brought widespread discontent. Many of these joined the Nazi Party. Conditions were favourable for the growth of the small party, and Hitler was sufficiently astute to take full advantage of them. When he joined the party, he found it ineffective, committed to a program of nationalist and socialist ideas but uncertain of its aims and divided in its leadership. He accepted its program but regarded it as a means to an end. His propaganda and his personal ambition caused friction with the other leaders of the party. Hitler countered their attempts to curb him by threatening resignation, and because the future of the party depended on his power to organize publicity and to acquire funds, his opponents relented. In July he became their leader with almost unlimited powers. From the first he set out to create a mass movement, whose mystique and power would be sufficient to bind its members in loyalty to him. The climax of this rapid growth of the Nazi Party in Bavaria came in an attempt to seize power in the Munich Beer Hall Putsch of November , when Hitler and General Erich Ludendorff tried to take advantage of the prevailing confusion and opposition to the Weimar Republic to force the leaders of the Bavarian government and the local army commander to proclaim a national revolution. In the melee that resulted, the police and the army fired at the advancing marchers, killing a few of them. Hitler was injured, and four policemen were killed. Placed on trial for treason , he characteristically took advantage of the immense publicity afforded to him. He also drew a vital lesson from the Putschâ€”that the movement must achieve power by legal means. He was sentenced to prison for five years but served only nine months, and those in relative comfort at Landsberg castle. Hitler used the time to dictate the first volume of Mein Kampf , his political autobiography as well as a compendium of his multitudinous ideas. Moreover, he believed that the state existed to serve the Volkâ€”a mission that to him the Weimar German Republic betrayed. All morality and truth were judged by this criterion: Parliamentary democratic government stood doubly condemned. It assumed the equality of individuals that for Hitler did not exist and supposed that what was in the interests of the Volk could be decided by parliamentary procedures. It was the rival Weltanschauung, Marxism which for him embraced social democracy as well as communism , with its insistence on internationalism and economic conflict. Beyond Marxism he believed the greatest enemy of all to be the Jew , who was for Hitler the incarnation of evil. Its final objective must be the removal of the Jews altogether. After his release, Hitler faced difficulties that had not existed before The republic seemed to have become more respectable. Hitler was forbidden to make speeches, first in Bavaria , then in many other German states these prohibitions remained in force until â€” Nevertheless, the party grew slowly in numbers, and in Hitler successfully established his position within it against Gregor Strasser , whose followers were primarily in northern Germany. The advent of the Depression in , however, led to a new period of political instability. The alliance also enabled him to seek support from many of the magnates of business and industry who controlled political funds and were anxious to use them to establish a strong right-wing, antisocialist government. The subsidies Hitler received from the industrialists placed his party on a secure financial footing and enabled him to make effective his emotional appeal to the lower middle class and the unemployed, based on the proclamation of his faith that Germany would awaken from its sufferings to reassert its natural greatness. But his most important achievement was the establishment of a truly national party with its voters and followers drawn from different classes and religious groups , unique in Germany at the time. Unremitting propaganda , set against the failure of the government to improve conditions during the Depression, produced a steadily mounting electoral strength for the Nazis. The party became the second largest in the country, rising from 2. In Hitler opposed Hindenburg in the presidential election, capturing The fear of communism and the rejection of the Social Democrats bound them together. On January 30, , Hindenburg offered him the chancellorship of Germany. His cabinet included few Nazis at that point. After his release from prison, he

often went to live on the Obersalzberg, near Berchtesgaden. His income at this time was derived from party funds and from writing for nationalist newspapers. He was largely indifferent to clothes and food but did not eat meat and gave up drinking beer and all other alcohols. His rather irregular working schedule prevailed. He usually rose late, sometimes dawdled at his desk, and retired late at night. At Berchtesgaden, his half sister Angela Raubal and her two daughters accompanied him. Hitler became devoted to one of them, Geli, and it seems that his possessive jealousy drove her to suicide in September. For weeks Hitler was inconsolable. Some time later Eva Braun, a shop assistant from Munich, became his mistress. Hitler rarely allowed her to appear in public with him. He would not consider marriage on the grounds that it would hamper his career. Braun was a simple young woman with few intellectual gifts.

4: The German heroes who helped Allies against Hitler | UK news | The Guardian

Of the Germans who opposed Hitler's dictatorship, very few groups openly protested the Nazi genocide against Jews. The "White Rose" movement was founded in June by Hans Scholl, a year-old medical student at the University of Munich, his year-old sister Sophie, and year-old Christoph Probst.

Vice Chancellor Franz von Papen, the leader of the Catholic right-wing, meanwhile negotiated a Reich concordat with the Holy See, which prohibited clergy from participating in politics. Most Catholic opposition to the regime came from the Catholic left-wing in the Christian trade unions, such as by the union leaders Jakob Kaiser and Blessed Nikolaus Gross. Hoffmann writes that, from the beginning: Over the years until the outbreak of war Catholic resistance stiffened until finally its most eminent spokesman was the Pope himself with his encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*. In general terms, therefore, the churches were the only major organisations to offer comparatively early and open resistance: The purge lasted two days over 30 June and 1 July. High-profile Catholic resistors were targeted - Klausener and Jung were murdered. The offices of President and Chancellor were combined, and Hitler ordered the Army to swear an oath directly to him. Hitler declared his "revolution" complete. He was part of the five-member commission that prepared the *Mit brennender Sorge* anti-Nazi encyclical of March, and sought to block the Nazi closure of Catholic schools and arrests of church officials. Arrested in , he died en route to Dachau Concentration Camp in . She organized aid circles for Jews, assisted many to escape. By , more than 70, people had been killed under this programme, many by gassing, and their bodies incinerated. This policy aroused strong opposition across German society, and especially among Catholics. Opposition to the policy sharpened after the German attack on the Soviet Union in June, because the war in the east produced for the first time large-scale German casualties, and the hospitals and asylums began to fill up with maimed and disabled young German soldiers. Catholic anger was further fuelled by actions of the Gauleiter of Upper Bavaria, Adolf Wagner, a militantly anti-Catholic Nazi, who in June ordered the removal of crucifixes from all schools in his Gau. This attack on Catholicism provoked the first public demonstrations against government policy since the Nazis had come to power, and the mass signing of petitions, including by Catholic soldiers serving at the front. When Hitler heard of this he ordered Wagner to rescind his decree, but the damage had been done – German Catholics had learned that the regime could be successfully opposed. On 3 August, von Galen was even more outspoken, broadening his attack to include the Nazi persecution of religious orders and the closing of Catholic institutions. Local Nazis asked for Galen to be arrested, but Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels told Hitler that if this happened there would be an open revolt in Westphalia. Hitler was jeered by an angry crowd at Hof, near Nuremberg – the only time he was opposed to his face in public during his 12 years of rule. It needs to be remembered that following the annexations of Austria and the Sudetenland, nearly half of all Germans were Catholic. On 24 August he ordered the cancellation of the T4 programme and issued strict instructions to the Gauleiters that there were to be no further provocations of the churches during the war. Although remaining publicly neutral, Pius advised the British in of the readiness of certain German generals to overthrow Hitler if they could be assured of an honourable peace, offered assistance to the German resistance in the event of a coup and warned the Allies of the planned German invasion of the Low Countries in . He stated his "profound grief" at the murder of the deformed, the insane, and those suffering from hereditary disease. The Encyclical was followed, on 26 September, by an open condemnation by the German Bishops which, from every German pulpit, denounced the killing of "innocent and defenceless mentally handicapped, incurably infirm and fatally wounded, innocent hostages, and disarmed prisoners of war and criminal offenders, people of a foreign race or descent". The movement grew into the Confessing Church, from which some clergymen opposed the Nazi regime. The Church has been ordered by its Master to see that Christ is honoured by our nation in a manner befitting the Judge of the world. The Church knows that it will be called to account if the German nation turns its back on Christ without being forewarned". Hundreds of pastors were arrested; Dr Weessler, a signatory to the memorandum, was killed at Sachsenhausen concentration camp and the funds of the church were confiscated and collections forbidden. He remained mainly at Dachau until the fall of the regime. Theological

universities were closed, and other pastors and theologians arrested. Arrested in , he was implicated in the July Plot to assassinate Hitler and executed. Oster Conspiracy Despite the removal of Blomberg and Fritsch, the army retained considerable independence, and senior officers were able to discuss their political views in private fairly freely. The Army Chief of Staff, General Ludwig Beck , regarded this as not only immoral but reckless, since he believed that Germany would lose such a war. The British and French were extremely doubtful of the ability of the German opposition to overthrow the Nazi regime and ignored these messages. An official of the British Foreign Office wrote on August 28, Goerdeler, but those for whom these emissaries claim to speak have never given us any reasons to suppose that they would be able or willing to take action such as would lead to the overthrow of the regime. This group was not committed to the overthrow of the regime but was loosely allied to another, more radical group, the "anti-Nazi" fraction centered on Colonel Hans Oster and Hans Bernd Gisevius , which wanted to use the crisis as an excuse for executing a putsch to overthrow the Nazi regime. The group wanted to avoid a major war and the potential catastrophic consequences for Germany. Beck was highly respected in the army and his removal shocked the officer corps. His successor as chief of staff, Franz Halder , remained in touch with him, and was also in touch with Oster. Privately, he said that he considered Hitler "the incarnation of evil". Oster, Gisevius, and Schacht urged Halder and Beck to stage an immediate coup against Hitler, but the army officers argued that they could only mobilize support among the officer corps for such a step if Hitler made overt moves towards war. Halder nevertheless asked Oster to draw up plans for a coup. The conspirators disagreed on what to do about Hitler if there was a successful army coup – eventually most overcame their scruples and agreed that he must be killed so that army officers would be free from their oath of loyalty. They agreed Halder would instigate the coup when Hitler committed an overt step towards war.

5: When did Germany turn against Hitler? | Yahoo Answers

Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler (), the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or Nazi Party, grew into a mass movement and ruled Germany through totalitarian means from to.

The men who translated it were Germans who fled to Britain to take up arms against their own country. Two new memoirs shed light on this little-known group. The outbreak of World War II saw thousands of people across Europe volunteer for military service, in a bid to do their duty for their respective countries. But among those who stepped forward for Britain were 10, German and Austrian nationals, who had fled the Nazis and were willing to fight against their own countrymen. Among them was Herman Rothman, a Jew born in Berlin. He came to England aged 14 on the Kindertransport, fleeing Nazi persecution shortly before war broke out in October, Mr Rothman and a handful of other German Jews were given a top-secret task - to translate the political and personal wills of Adolf Hitler. He had written them on 29 April earlier that year, then committed suicide, probably on 30 April - the exact date remains uncertain. He became a British citizen in , meaning he fought for Britain while still a German. All of those who escaped from Germany felt the same. As a soldier he was known as Harry Rothman. It was while working in Fallingbomel internment camp in Germany that Mr Rothman was woken up early by his commanding officer, who urgently requested his presence. Three copies of the documents had been made by Hitler. The letters were typed in capitals. Nobody writes a letter on parchment. I got the feeling that, with this last act, he wanted to impress the German people. Adolf Hitler made three copies of his personal and political wills Enlarge Image "I said to them - who is to blame, ultimately, for the food shortage? Can anybody be blamed but yourselves? You are abschaum der menschheit - scum of the earth. But he was cleared after a brief inquiry, although he suggests it perhaps "cost him a medal". He fled Germany days before his 17th birthday, his family being fearful for his safety. He died a month later. Arriving in Britain in February with little command of the English language, Mr Anson volunteered to fight for Britain after the outbreak of war, joining the Pioneer Corps. He says he received "friendly interest and compassionate understanding" from Britons who detected his Germanic origins. They were quite aware that refugees from Nazi Germany were opposed to the Nazis. These foreign soldiers were also advised on personal security issues, given their backgrounds. They were told to make up cover stories in case they were ever captured to account for their accents - that they had spent time in Germany as children, for example. Brain exposed They were also told to change their names to more English versions, with the same initials as their Germanic names, to help them remember these new identities. Colin chose his new surname because, at the very moment he was asked to make one up, an Anson communications plane flew overhead. Herman Rothman fled to the UK when he was 14 After completing his training, Colin was attached to another commando unit and took part in the invasion of Sicily, where he suffered a head wound so severe it left part of his brain exposed and he was not expected to survive. But he did eventually recover, serving the British again on commando raids in Yugoslavia, Albania, and then in the liberation of Corfu. His language skills became invaluable as increasing numbers of German POWs were captured. Did he have any qualms about fighting fellow Germans? When we were in action against enemy forces something in a grey uniform was a target to shoot at. What else should they do under the circumstances? What else should they have done? They were called up and did their duty, as they saw it, for their country. They had very few opportunities for acting otherwise. Below is a selection of your comments. I had always understood that any Germans in Britain at the time of the outbreak of the war were assumed hostile at worst, or at best, not utterly dependable. I recently worked with a German friend whose uncle had been both decorated by, and murdered by, the SS. The guys in this story really should be celebrated - had they themselves become POWs you can assume that the Nazis would have created a whole new level of foul brutality for their treatment. Joe, Glasgow It must be very hard to take sides against your country of birth, even when you believe the people in charge are in the wrong. The actions of these men, at a time when the full extent of the wickedness of the Nazi regime was not as obvious as it was to become, are particularly courageous. Paulm, Braintree What a decision to have to make by the parents of these boys, and by the boys themselves. The biggest decisions most people have to make cannot

compare. They begged for support from the Allies, but it was usually impossible until the later stages. During the famous ill-fated conspiracy to assassinate Hitler, contact was made with the Allies, but Roosevelt had publicly insisted on unconditional surrender, and the destruction of Europe continued. Had Germany been allowed to negotiate for peace, the Holocaust might not have been exposed to the world. The Germans or the Nazis? These very brave men fought against their country, and are lauded for it. But, William Joyce fought, or at least acted against his country, and is branded a traitor. If we were fighting the Nazis, why were the Germans held to be responsible? The humanity of the two men is very touching.

6: The War Against the Jews

Memorial plaque to resistance members and wreath at the Bendlerblock, Berlin. The German Resistance (Widerstand) was the opposition by individuals and groups in Germany to Adolf Hitler or the National Socialist regime between and

Anderson, led by Captain Jesse Cooper. The other, captained by Ernest McSorley, was the S. The ship was last seen on radar around 7: Edmund Fitzgerald, and what happened to it that fateful day: The large cargo vessels that roamed the five Great Lakes were known as lakers, and the S. Edmund Fitzgerald was, at the time, the biggest ever built. It was christened on June 8, , and made its first voyage on September 24 the same year. The chairman of Northwestern Mutual had a long history with the Great Lakes shipping industry. November is a brutal month on the Great Lakes. Frequent storms and hurricane-force winds can batter even the toughest-built freighters. It left at 2: A second ship, the Arthur M. Gale warnings had been issued by the National Weather Service the previous day, and by the morning of the 10th, the advisories had been upgraded to an official storm warning. As swells reached 35 feet and winds raged at nearly mph, the ship contacted Coast Guard officials in Sault Ste. Marie and said they were taking on water. After that, there was nothing on the radar. The ship was approximately 15 miles north of Whitefish Point when it seemingly vanished. Captain Cooper, on the Anderson, was in contact with the Coast Guard and made it to Whitefish Point sometime after 8 p. Later, the Anderson made its way back into the storm to search for the ship, but found only a pair of lifeboats and debris. Along with the captain, the other crew members of the Fitzgerald included porters, oilers, engineers, maintenance workers, cooks, watchmen, deck hands, and wheelmen. Most crew members were from Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, and Minnesota. The treacherous weather conditions are an obvious factor, but experts differ on what they think specifically caused the accident. Following the wreck, the U. Coast Guard and National Transportation Safety Board agreed that the tragedy was likely due to faulty cargo hatches, which led to flooding. Predictably, there are still those who harbor other theories, including unsecured hatches, maintenance troubles, massive waves, structural issues, and yes, even aliens. Author and Great Lakes historian Frederick Stonehouse posited that the ship likely hit a shoal and took on too much water before plunging into Lake Superior. Navy and Coast Guard deployed planes and cutters with magnetic anomaly detectors, sidescan sonar, and sonar survey to find the wreckage. In May, a Navy underwater recovery vehicle was sent to the site, and on May 20, , the ship was spotted below the surface of the lake. In the decades since, only a handful of people have been able to see the wreck, which lies in two pieces. A pair of divers made their way down in , the same year a crewâ€™ with help from the Canadian Navy, the National Geographic Society, Sony, and the Sault Ste. The Canadian government has since prohibited access to the site. For more on the story and the ship, visit S. This article originally appeared in

7: Germany declares war on the United States - HISTORY

The common belief is that Adolf Hitler and the Nazis ruled Germany with an iron fist, crushing any rebellion or dissent with swift fury. However, there were a number of groups active in Germany that were trying to take down the Nazis. These groups were collectively known simply as "Widerstand."

This is a mass pamphlet issued by the Nazis during the second round of the presidential campaign, held on 10 April. Hitler did well in the first round, forcing a run-off. The Nazi hope was to win a majority in the second round. This pamphlet was released within a week or two of that election, and aims to present Hitler as the only person able to save Germany, a capable politician who has been slandered by a frightened opposition. It seems to be aimed at the electorate in general rather than a specific group. One man is the year-old Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, the other is the year-old man of the people and front soldier Adolf Hitler. It is a piece of the German tragedy that those who today are depending on the honor and fame of the field marshal are the same ones who smeared him for fourteen years, and that they are forced to oppose the man who anchored his mythos in the people over a year struggle. Hindenburg, his officers, and his victorious army were once the target of the gutter press and the deceivers of the people. Now the Red and Black barrage is aimed at Adolf Hitler, the leader of young Germany, the leader of freedom. Now he is slandered in word and picture, portrayed as a tyrant and actor, branded as a gourmet, a glutton, only because his battle slogan is: Death to Marxism so that Germany may live! For years we have been silent about these miserable lies. We want to talk about Adolf Hitler as a person, as we see him. This is the truth. He who speaks differently lies! More than twelve years ago, the first dozen National Socialists gathered each week around a table as Adolf Hitler spoke fervently about the future that had to belong to us, to us National Socialists. We did not have much. There was the old driver Mayer, and the locksmith Riedel, but Adolf Hitler was surely the poorest of us all. He wore the uniform of a demobilized soldier and his brown military boots. For lunch, he chose the cheapest item on the menu. But I never heard Hitler complain, he never spoke of his poverty. Yet he had known poverty since his youth as he went hungry in Vienna, without a mother or father, or during the war as the only one in his company who never received a package, and remained as poor after the great struggle. As the others thought about their families, about their possessions and their money, Adolf Hitler preached the battle for freedom. Hunger and poverty reduced millions to people who knew no fatherland any more, but poverty made of Hitler a nationalist, but also a socialist, a spokesman for the deprived among our people. But today he lives in fine style, drinks champagne, and orders tablecloths that cost 20 Marks. That, at least, is what the gutter journalists write. The Red party hacks and their servants probably think that way because that is how they behave. Let us look at how this man lived during the several weeks in which the National Socialist Party took in half a million marks through his speeches: No alcohol, no meat, no cigar, no cigarette. Those who doubt it can check with the hotels where Hitler stayed during his trips, and which are well known to the Jewish and Social Democratic rat finks. Between trips through German territory, when there is no public meeting, no S. Here he shows his companions an old archway, there a German cathedral soaring to the heavens, here a splendid German bridge, there a memorial to a hero of German intellectual life. He speaks of German history and how to use it, of the newest type of airplane, then in a village somewhere brushes the head of the boy of a German worker that the mother proudly raises toward him. Everyone, therefore, comes to him for help, and just as he will one day be the savior of the whole people, today he helps each individual fighter. He who has not yet entirely understood the powerful new idea of National Socialism will find the way to a New Germany through Hitler, the man. Achieving freedom for the German people, Achieving its proper place among the peoples, Building the foundations for its ability to survive. Hitler is convinced that freedom for the German people and its appropriate position among the peoples can be gained through entirely peaceful methods. The prerequisite is the firm and consistent leadership of German foreign policy that, combined with a corresponding domestic policy rooted in a people that once again has the will to assert itself, will convince foreign states that Germany is a valuable partner. Hitler wants to work together with states that have interests that allow, or even require, working together with Germany. Instead of emotional policies, he favors a policy of self interest, which

recognizes the same factor as the driving force of the policies of all peoples. This requires the organization of the domestic life of a people according to the principles that will best enable it to face the rest of the world, and so support the necessary foreign policy. This means replacing the system of irresponsible leadership based on decisions made by a parliamentary majority of amateurs with a system based on the personal responsibility of a capable leader, supported by the advice of experts. It means the replacement of the majority with the value of personality. It means eliminating Jewish-Bolshevist manifestations in all areas of culture. It means the greatest possible support for the economy and the use of all suitable methods to bring the unemployed back into the production process to add new purchasing power and new opportunities for the domestic markets. It means the gradual reduction of excessive taxes and a return to a tax system characterized by a few easily understood taxes. It means a reduction in excessive interest rates, above all with respect to foreign debts. It means stable prices, which permit long-term planning. It means the protection of domestic production, in particular agricultural production, since agriculture provides our food and is the prerequisite for the independence, and therefore the freedom, of the nation: Capital and labor are equally essential for highly developed economy. Neither of the two factors can benefit at the cost of the other – which in the long one would lead both to suffer. Therefore, class struggle must be eliminated and class differences bridged. This requires a just distribution of economic success. Community spirit and mutual confidence, hand in hand with the regulatory activity of the state when required, will create the foundation for healthy economic growth. Hitler refuses to provide details as to how his goals will be reached, since experience shows that the present government adopts at least parts of such plans, usually in an incomplete manner – thereby avoiding a really effective attack on the root cause, such as unemployment – which discredits them, since there is no healthy and constructive result. One only need mention the National Socialist proposal in the Reichstag a year and a half ago to require a general reduction in interest rates. It was attacked from all sides. One may be persuaded that the same is true of the other measures Hitler plans to save countless individuals, the economy, and the entire nation. This is even more the case, since Hitler does not plan risky or amateurish experiments, but rather to follow the advice of leading and recognized experts in all areas. The man who, because of his extraordinary knowledge and ability in all areas, was able to rise from nothing to his present position as the leader of millions in Germany, despite tremendous resistance, is perhaps the only one who has the ability to master the enormous tasks, rescuing the nation at the eleventh hour from its almost hopeless situation. Led by fate, he followed his path. It would not be the first time in history that Germany was rescued by the right man in its greatest need! Each must therefore be aware of the responsibility that he bears if he hinders Hitler from taking the fate of the people in his hands, particularly in view of the failure of previous governments. And nothing speaks more for Hitler. As a child, Hitler supposedly spit on the host. He is a covert Bolshevik. Hitler betrayed South Tyrol and was rewarded with money from Italy. Hitler supposedly received money from a number of big industrialists so that he would use his forces to break strikes. Hitler supposedly received money from Jews. Hitler supposedly received money from Ford. Hitler supposedly received money from Borsig. Hitler supposedly was engaged to a Jew. Adolf Hitler supposedly received French funds. The Berliner Tageblatt, close to the Marxists, worked to spread this lie throughout the world. The Center Party lied: Hitler supposedly had a luxurious room house; he supposedly had a luxurious villa in Berchtesgaden. There was a tapestry supposedly worth 80, Marks in the Brown House [the Nazi headquarters in Munich], a banister worth 30, Marks, a 3, Mark wood-carved chair. Hitler supposedly received money from Switzerland. Hitler supposedly had negotiations with separatist leader Heinz Orbis. As a result, even the Soviet Russian government had to distance itself from the forgery. Hitler supposedly received a prison sentence for deserting the German army, for which he received amnesty from Kurt Eisner the slanderer had to pay a 50 Mark fine! Hitler supposedly ordered Jewish cemeteries to be desecrated. Adolf Hitler supposedly said in his book Mein Kampf that lies may be used in any situation. The cited passage was false from start to finish. Hitler supposedly sent one of his representatives to Paris to negotiate a German-French military agreement with France. Hitler supposedly stated that in the Third Reich all handicapped children will be killed. Hitler supposedly was paid 2, Marks for each meeting he spoke at. Hitler supposedly wanted to introduce forced labor for the unemployed, but National Socialists would be exempt. Hitler was supposedly Czech. Hitler supposedly wanted to destroy

the unions. Schneider-Creuzot supposedly gave Hitler money. The Center Party and S. Hitler supposedly no longer believes in his mission or in winning the presidential election. Japan supposedly gave Hitler money. If elected Reich President, Hitler would supposedly cut all pensions. Foreign countries, above all France, would supposedly not tolerate Hitler as president, German credit would be destroyed, etc. This totals, supposedly, , Marks a year. Hitler would supposedly fire all employed women. During his political career, Hitler instituted cases against such lies.

8: Facts and Lies about Hitler

The bombing of Pearl Harbor surprised even Germany. Although Hitler had made an oral agreement with his Axis partner Japan that Germany would join a war against the United States, he was uncertain.

The young Hitler was a resentful, discontented child. Moody, lazy, of unstable temperament, he was deeply hostile towards his strict, authoritarian father and strongly attached to his indulgent, hard-working mother, whose death from cancer in December was a shattering blow to the adolescent Hitler. Hitler as a baby After spending four years in the Realschule in Linz, he left school at the age of sixteen with dreams of becoming a painter. In October, the provincial, middle-class boy left home for Vienna, where he was to remain until leading a bohemian, vagabond existence. Embittered at his rejection by the Viennese Academy of Fine Arts, he was to spend "five years of misery and woe" in Vienna as he later recalled, adopting a view of life which changed very little in the ensuing years, shaped as it was by a pathological hatred of Jews and Marxists, liberalism and the cosmopolitan Habsburg monarchy. In Vienna he acquired his first education in politics by studying the demagogic techniques of the popular Christian-social Mayor, Karl Lueger, and picked up the stereotyped, obsessive anti-Semitism with its brutal, violent sexual connotations and concern with the "purity of blood" that remained with him to the end of his career. From crackpot racial theorists like the defrocked monk, Lanz von Liebenfels, and the Austrian Pan-German leader, Georg von Schoenerer, the young Hitler learned to discern in the "Eternal Jew" the symbol and cause of all chaos, corruption and destruction in culture, politics and the economy. The press, prostitution, syphilis, capitalism, Marxism, democracy and pacifism--all were so many means which "the Jew" exploited in his conspiracy to undermine the German nation and the purity of the creative Aryan race. Hitler proved an able, courageous soldier, receiving the Iron Cross First Class for bravery, but did not rise above the rank of Lance Corporal. Twice wounded, he was badly gassed four weeks before the end of the war and spent three months recuperating in a hospital in Pomerania. Temporarily blinded and driven to impotent rage by the abortive November revolution in Germany as well as the military defeat, Hitler, once restored, was convinced that fate had chosen him to rescue a humiliated nation from the shackles of the Versailles Treaty, from Bolsheviks and Jews. Hitler Becomes a Leader Hitler discovered a powerful talent for oratory as well as giving the new Party its symbol "the swastika" and its greeting "Heil!". By November Hitler was recognized as Fuhrer of a movement which had 3, members, and boosted his personal power by organizing strong-arm squads to keep order at his meetings and break up those of his opponents. Hitler focused his propaganda against the Versailles Treaty, the "November criminals," the Marxists and the visible, internal enemy No. In the twenty-five-point programme of the NSDAP announced on 24 February, the exclusion of the Jews from the Volk community, the myth of Aryan race supremacy and extreme nationalism were combined with "socialistic" ideas of profit-sharing and nationalization inspired by ideologues like Gottfried Feder. Its ultimate goal must implacably be the total removal of the Jews. Bursting into a beer-hall in Munich and firing his pistol into the ceiling, he shouted out that he was heading a new provisional government which would carry through a revolution against "Red Berlin. Hitler was arrested and tried on 26 February, succeeding in turning the tables on his accusers with a confident, propagandist speech which ended with the prophecy: Subsequently the "bible" of the Nazi Party, this crude, half-baked hotchpotch of primitive Social Darwinism, racial myth, anti-Semitism and lebensraum fantasy had sold over five million copies by and been translated into eleven languages. The failure of the Beer-Hall putsch and his period of imprisonment transformed Hitler from an incompetent adventurer into a shrewd political tactician, who henceforth decided that he would never again confront the gun barrels of army and police until they were under his command. He concluded that the road to power lay not through force alone but through legal subversion of the Weimar Constitution, the building of a mass movement and the combination of parliamentary strength with extra-parliamentary street terror and intimidation. Helped by Goering and Goebbels he began to reassemble his followers and rebuild the movement which had disintegrated in his absence. Outmaneuvering the "socialist" North German wing of the Party under Gregor Strasser, Hitler re-established himself in as the ultimate arbiter to whom all factions appealed in an ideologically and socially

heterogeneous movement. Avoiding rigid, programmatic definitions of National Socialism which would have undermined the charismatic nature of his legitimacy and his claim to absolute leadership, Hitler succeeded in extending his appeal beyond Bavaria and attracting both Right and Left to his movement. Though the Nazi Party won only twelve seats in the elections, the onset of the Great Depression with its devastating effects on the middle classes helped Hitler to win over all those strata in German society who felt their economic existence was threatened. In addition to peasants, artisans, craftsmen, traders, small businessmen, ex-officers, students and declassé intellectuals, the Nazis began to win over the big industrialists, nationalist conservatives and army circles. With the backing of the press tycoon, Alfred Hugenberg, Hitler received a tremendous nationwide exposure just as the effects of the world economic crisis hit Germany, producing mass unemployment, social dissolution, fear and indignation. Hitler and President von Hindenburg In the elections the Nazi vote jumped dramatically from 3, to 6, The following month Hitler officially acquired German citizenship and decided to run for the Presidency, receiving 13, votes in the run-off elections of 10 April as against 19, votes for the victorious von Hindenburg , but four times the vote for the communist candidate, Ernst Thaelmann. In the Reichstag elections of July the Nazis emerged as the largest political party in Germany, obtaining nearly fourteen million votes Although the NSDAP fell back in November to eleven million votes seats , Hitler was helped to power by a camarilla of conservative politicians led by Franz von Papen , who persuaded the reluctant von Hindenburg to nominate "the Bohemian corporal" as Reich Chancellor on 30 January Once in the saddle, Hitler moved with great speed to outmanoeuvre his rivals, virtually ousting the conservatives from any real participation in government by July , abolishing the free trade unions, eliminating the communists, Social Democrats and Jews from any role in political life and sweeping opponents into concentration camps. With support from the nationalists, Hitler gained a majority at the last "democratic" elections held in Germany on 5 March and with cynical skill he used the whole gamut of persuasion, propaganda, terror and intimidation to secure his hold on power. The seductive notions of "National Awakening" and a "Legal Revolution" helped paralyse potential opposition and disguise the reality of autocratic power behind a facade of traditional institutions. Avoiding any institutionalization of authority and status which could challenge his own undisputed position as supreme arbiter, Hitler allowed subordinates like Himmler , Goering and Goebbels to mark out their own domains of arbitrary power while multiplying and duplicating offices to a bewildering degree. During the next four years Hitler enjoyed a dazzling string of domestic and international successes, outwitting rival political leaders abroad just as he had defeated his opposition at home. In he abandoned the Versailles Treaty and began to build up the army by conscripting five times its permitted number. He persuaded Great Britain to allow an increase in the naval building programme and in March he occupied the demilitarized Rhineland without meeting opposition. He began building up the Luftwaffe and supplied military aid to Francoist forces in Spain , which brought about the Spanish fascist victory in The German rearmament programme led to full employment and an unrestrained expansion of production, which reinforced by his foreign policy successes--the Rome-Berlin pact of , the Anschluss with Austria and the "liberation" of the Sudeten Germans in 1938 brought Hitler to the zenith of his popularity. In February he dismissed sixteen senior generals and took personal command of the armed forces, thus ensuring that he would be able to implement his aggressive designs. Poland was overrun in less than one month, Denmark and Norway in two months, Holland , Belgium , Luxemburg and France in six weeks. After the fall of France in June only Great Britain stood firm. Hitler turned to the Balkans and North Africa where his Italian allies had suffered defeats, his armies rapidly overrunning Greece , Yugoslavia, the island of Crete and driving the British from Cyrenaica. The crucial decision of his career, the invasion of Soviet Russia on June 22, 1941 , was rationalized by the idea that its destruction would prevent Great Britain from continuing the war with any prospect of success. He was convinced that once he kicked the door in, as he told Jodl q. The war against Russia was to be an anti-Bolshevik crusade, a war of annihilation in which the fate of European Jewry would finally be sealed. At the end of January Hitler had prophesied that "if the international financial Jewry within and outside Europe should succeed once more in dragging the nations into a war, the result will be, not the Bolshevization of the world and thereby the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe. The measures already taken in those regions of Poland annexed to the Reich against Jews and Poles

indicated the genocidal implications of Nazi-style "Germanization" policies. At first the German armies carried all before them, overrunning vast territories, overwhelming the Red Army, encircling Leningrad and reaching within striking distance of Moscow. But the Soviet Union did not collapse as expected and Hitler, instead of concentrating his attack on Moscow, ordered a pincer movement around Kiev to seize the Ukraine, increasingly procrastinating and changing his mind about objectives. Underestimating the depth of military reserves on which the Russians could call, the caliber of their generals and the resilient, fighting spirit of the Russian people whom he dismissed as inferior peasants, Hitler prematurely proclaimed in October that the Soviet Union had been "struck down and would never rise again. The disaster before Moscow in December led him to dismiss his Commander-in-Chief von Brauchitsch, and many other key commanders who sought permission for tactical withdrawals, including Guderian, Bock, Hoepner, von Rundstedt and Leeb, found themselves cashiered. Hitler now assumed personal control of all military operations, refusing to listen to advice, disregarding unpalatable facts and rejecting everything that did not fit into his preconceived picture of reality. His neglect of the Mediterranean theatre and the Middle East, the failure of the Italians, the entry of the United States into the war, and above all the stubborn determination of the Russians, pushed Hitler on to the defensive. From the winter of the writing was on the wall but Hitler refused to countenance military defeat, believing that implacable will and the rigid refusal to abandon positions could make up for inferior resources and the lack of a sound overall strategy. Convinced that his own General Staff was weak and indecisive, if not openly treacherous, Hitler became more prone to outbursts of blind, hysterical fury towards his generals, when he did not retreat into bouts of misanthropic brooding. His health, too, deteriorated under the impact of the drugs prescribed by his quack physician, Dr. The Allied invasion of Normandy followed on June 6, and soon a million Allied troops were driving the German armies eastwards, while from the opposite direction the Soviet forces advanced relentlessly on the Reich. The total mobilization of the German war economy under Albert Speer and the energetic propaganda efforts of Joseph Goebbels to rouse the fighting spirit of the German people were impotent to change the fact that the Third Reich lacked the resources equal to a struggle against the world alliance which Hitler himself had provoked. US Army newspaper announcing Hitlers death Allied bombing began to have a telling effect on German industrial production and to undermine the morale of the population. The plot failed and Hitler took implacable vengeance on the conspirators, watching with satisfaction a film of the grisly executions carried out on his orders. As disaster came closer, Hitler buried himself in the unreal world of the Fuhrerbunker in Berlin, clutching at fantastic hopes that his "secret weapons," the V-1 and V-2 rockets, would yet turn the tide of war. He gestured wildly over maps, planned and directed attacks with non-existent armies and indulged in endless, night-long monologues which reflected his growing senility, misanthropy and contempt for the "cowardly failure" of the German people. As the Red Army approached Berlin and the Anglo-Americans reached the Elbe, on 19 March Hitler ordered the destruction of what remained of German industry, communications and transport systems. He was resolved that, if he did not survive, Germany too should be destroyed. The same ruthless nihilism and passion for destruction which had led to the extermination of six million Jews in death camps, to the biological "cleansing" of the sub-human Slavs and other subject peoples in the New Order, was finally turned on his own people. On April 29, he married his mistress Eva Braun and dictated his final political testament, concluding with the same monotonous, obsessive fixation that had guided his career from the beginning: His body was carried into the garden of the Reich Chancellery by aides, covered with petrol and burned along with that of Eva Braun. This final, macabre act of self-destruction appropriately symbolized the career of a political leader whose main legacy to Europe was the ruin of its civilization and the senseless sacrifice of human life for the sake of power and his own commitment to the bestial nonsense of National Socialist race mythology. With his death nothing was left of the "Greater Germanic Reich," of the tyrannical power structure and ideological system which had devastated Europe during the twelve years of his totalitarian rule.

9: Holocaust Timeline: The Nazification of Germany

It's 65 years since Hitler drafted his will before committing suicide. The men who translated it were Germans who fled to Britain to take up arms against their own country. Two new memoirs shed light on this little-known group. The outbreak of World War II saw thousands of people across Europe.

Nazi Germany had stumbled in the skies over Britain but Hitler was not discouraged. In the past, he had repeatedly overcome setbacks of one sort or another through drastic action elsewhere to both triumph over the failure and to move toward his ultimate goal. Now it was time to do it again. For Hitler, the war itself was first and foremost a racial struggle and he viewed all aspects of the conflict in racial terms. He considered the peoples of Western Europe and the British Isles to be racial comrades, ranked among the higher order of humans. The supreme form of human, according to Hitler, was the Germanic person, characterized by his or her fair skin, blond hair and blue eyes. All of this had been outlined in his book, *Mein Kampf*, first published in March of 1925. In March of 1941, he assembled his top generals and told them how their troops should behave: All officers will have to rid themselves of obsolete [moral] ideologies. I insist absolutely that my orders be executed without contradiction. Therefore the commissars will be liquidated. German soldiers guilty of breaking international law will be excused. For his most senior generals, the utterances of their Supreme Commander posed a dilemma. They were mostly men of the old-school, born and raised in Imperial Germany, long before Hitler, amid traditional morals of bygone days. But to comply, they would have to abandon time-honored codes of military conduct, considered obsolete by Hitler, which prohibited senseless murder of civilians. Instead, they dutifully planned the invasion of Russia, knowing the attack would unleash an unprecedented wave of murder. The invasion plan for Russia was named Operation Barbarossa Red Beard by Hitler in honor of German ruler Frederick I, nicknamed Red Beard, who had orchestrated a ruthless attack on the Slavic peoples of the East some eight centuries earlier. Barbarossa would be Blitzkrieg again but on a continental scale this time, as Hitler boasted to his generals, "When Barbarossa commences the world will hold its breath and make no comment! Although somewhat outnumbered by the Russians, Hitler believed they did not pose a serious threat and would fall apart just like their fellow Slavs, the Poles, did in 1918. Against an army of battle-hardened, racially superior Germans, the Russians would be finished in a matter of weeks, Hitler claimed. Most of his generals concurred, supported by recent evidence. They had watched with keen interest as Soviet Russia confidently invaded Finland in November 1939, only to see the Red Army disintegrate into a disorganized jumble amid embarrassing defeats at the hands of a much smaller blond-haired Finnish fighting force. Buoyed by Hitler and awash in their own arrogance, the generals confidently finalized the details of Operation Barbarossa as the bulk of the German troops and armor slowly moved into position in the weeks leading up to May 1941. But as the invasion date neared, complications arose that upset the whole timetable. British troops stationed in the Mediterranean then moved in to help the Greeks fend off the Italians. For Hitler, the very idea of British troops in Southern Europe was enough to keep him awake at night. It would therefore be necessary to secure the Balkans before launching Barbarossa. To quickly achieve this, Hitler slipped back into a familiar role – the political master manipulator – forging overnight alliances with two Balkan countries, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. But in Yugoslavia, things unexpectedly spiraled out of control when the government, upon its alliance with Hitler, was immediately overthrown by its own citizens. Hitler was enraged by the news, perceiving it as a blow to his prestige. Meanwhile, beginning on Sunday, April 6, 1941, the Wehrmacht poured 29 divisions into the region, taking Yugoslavia by storm, then took Greece for good measure, forcing British troops there to make a hasty exit. Thus the Balkans were secured. However, these actions took nearly five weeks and caused a lot of wear and tear on tanks and other armored equipment needed for the Russian campaign. General Heinz Guderian in Russia, full of confidence as well. The new launch date for Barbarossa was Sunday, June 22, 1941. On that day, beginning at 3:00 AM, Russian field commanders made frantic calls to headquarters asking for orders, but were told there were no orders. Sleepy-eyed infantrymen scrambled out of their tents to find themselves already surrounded by Germans, with no option but to surrender. Bridges were captured intact while hundreds of Russian planes were destroyed sitting on the ground. I have decided again

today to place the fate and future of the Reich and our people in the hands of our soldiers. May God aid us, especially in this fight. But he also made a lot of Germans very nervous. And that was infectious of course. We simply thought it would be similar to what it was like in France or in Poland – everybody was convinced of that, considering the fabulous army we had. Whole armies of hapless Russians were now surrendering as the relentless three-pronged Blitzkrieg blasted its way forward. The result was chaos. Georgy Semenyak, a year-old Russian soldier at the time, remembered: During the day airplanes continuously dropped bombs on the retreating soldiers. When the order was given for the retreat, there were huge numbers of people heading in every direction. The lieutenants, captains, second-lieutenants took rides on passing vehicles – mostly trucks traveling eastwards. And without commanders, our ability to defend ourselves was so severely weakened that there was really nothing we could do. At present, three gigantic army groups were proceeding like clockwork toward their objectives. Army Group North, with 20 infantry divisions and six armored divisions, headed for Leningrad now St. Petersburg by the Baltic Sea. Army Group South, with 33 infantry and eight armored divisions, headed for Kiev, capital of the Ukraine, the breadbasket of Europe with its fertile wheat fields. Along the way, German field commanders employed their already-perfected Blitzkrieg techniques time and time again to pierce Russian defensive lines and surround bewildered Red Army soldiers. But the Russians kept fighting. German infantrymen plunge ever deeper into Russia. Hitler at the map table with Army Commander-in-Chief Brauchitsch and others, including Friedrich Paulus 2nd from left. Despite staggering losses of men and equipment, pockets of fanatical resistance now emerged, unlike anything the Germans had encountered thus far in the war. And there were more surprises for the Germans. They had grossly underestimated the total fighting strength of the Red Army. Instead of divisions, the Russians could field divisions when fully mobilized. This meant there were three million additional Russians available to fight. Another emerging factor was the vastness of Russia itself. It was one thing to ponder a map, something else to traverse the boundless countryside, as Field Marshal Manstein remembered: The distant horizon seemed like some mountain ridge behind which a paradise might beckon, but it only stretched on and on. It also taxed the ability of the Luftwaffe to provide close cover for advancing ground troops, a vital ingredient in the Blitzkrieg formula. On top of this, Russian resistance began to stiffen all over as the soldiers and people rallied behind Stalin in the defense of their Motherland. Stalin, at first overwhelmed by the magnitude of Barbarossa, had regained his bearings and publicly appealed for a "Great Patriotic War" against the Nazi invaders. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, he enacted ruthless measures, executing his top commander in the west and various field commanders who had been too eager to retreat. They set up new defensive positions, not to be yielded until every last soldier was killed. They also began their first-ever counter-attacks against the advancing Germans. As a result, with each passing day the Germans began to lose momentum. They could no longer easily blow through the Russian defenses and had to be wary of counter-strikes. All the while, German foot soldiers were becoming increasingly fatigued. By August of 1941, it had become apparent to the Army High Command there would be no speedy victory. Therefore the question now arose – what to do – follow the original battle plan for Barbarossa or make changes to adapt? Army Group Center was presently about 100 miles from Moscow, poised for a massive assault. However, the original plan called for Army Groups North and South to stage the main attacks in Russia, with Army Group Center playing a supporting role until their tasks were completed, after which Moscow would be taken. The decision rested solely with the Supreme Commander. In what was perhaps his single biggest decision of World War II, Hitler passed up the chance to attack Moscow during the summer of 1941. Instead, he clung to the original plan to crush Leningrad in the north and simultaneously seize the Ukraine in the south. This, Hitler lectured his generals, would be far more devastating to the Russians than the fall of Moscow. A successful attack in the north would wreck the city named after one of the founders of Soviet Russia, Vladimir Lenin. Attacking the south would destroy the Russian armies protecting the region and place vital agricultural and industrial areas in German hands. Though they remained unconvinced, the generals dutifully halted the advance on Moscow and repositioned troops and tanks away from Army Group Center to aid Army Groups North and South. By late September, bolstered by the additional Panzer tanks, Army Group South successfully captured the city of Kiev in the Ukraine, taking 600,000 Russian prisoners. As Army Group North approached Leningrad, a beautiful old city with palaces that once

belonged to the Czars, Hitler ordered the place flattened via massive aerial and artillery bombardments. This time Hitler consented, but only partly. He would allow an attack on Moscow, provided that Army Group North also completed the capture of Leningrad, while Army Group South advanced deeper into southern Russia toward Stalingrad, the city on the Volga River named after the Soviet dictator. This meant German forces in Russia would be attacking simultaneously on three major fronts over two thousand miles long, stretching their manpower and resources to the absolute limit. Realizing the danger, the generals pleaded once more for permission to focus on Moscow alone and strike the city with overwhelming force. But Hitler said no. In the meantime, German troops still holding outside Moscow had remained idle for nearly two months, waiting for orders to advance. When the push finally began on October 2, , a noticeable chill already hung in the morning air, and in a few places, snowflakes wafted from the sky. The notorious Russian winter was just around the corner. At first it appeared Moscow might be another easy success. Two Russian army groups defending the main approach were quickly encircled and broken up by motorized Germans who took , prisoners. Confident the war in Russia was just about won, Hitler took a leap by announcing victory to the German people: Only 90, Russian soldiers stood between the German armies and the Soviet capital. The entire government, including Stalin himself, prepared to evacuate. But then the weather turned.

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