

Resistance against National Socialism. Widerstandsbewegungen im Dritten Reich untersuchen (Klasse 9/10)

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The "White Rose" tried to resist the Nazi regime by distributing leaflets.

Deutschland ist eine funktionierende Demokratie: Die Menschen dürfen ihre Meinung frei äußern und müssen sich nicht vor staatlichen Übergriffen fürchten. Luxus in der heutigen Zeit! So wird Deutschland zu einem Land, in das Menschen aus der ganzen Welt strömen, um vor Gewalt und Verfolgung zu fliehen. Dabei vergisst man leicht, dass dies auch in Deutschland nicht immer so war. Vor noch nicht einmal hundert Jahren haben Menschen beim Versuch, sich gegen das Nazi-Regime aufzulehnen und dessen Verbrechen aufzudecken, ihr Leben verloren.

Doch warum kam es überhaupt zu einer Diktatur in Deutschland? Warum konnte man nicht schon den Aufbau eines solchen Systems verhindern? Wer ist dann eigentlich wie gegen das Regime vorgegangen? Und was ist mit diesen Widerständlern passiert? In dieser Unterrichtseinheit bekommen die Schüler die Möglichkeit, sich mit diesen Fragestellungen auseinanderzusetzen. Im Rahmen eines Gruppenpuzzles beschäftigen sie sich mit ausgewählten Widerständlern und lernen deren Motive und Vorgehensweise kennen.

Klassenstufe: 9/10

Dauer: 4 Schulstunden (+Test)

Bereich: Drittes Reich, Zweiter Weltkrieg, Widerstandsbewegungen

Kompetenzen:

- Formen des Widerstandes im Dritten Reich kennen
- die Schritte zur Machtergreifung Hitlers verstehen
- Gesetzestexte verstehen

Ueberschär, Gerd (2006): Für ein anderes Deutschland: Der deutsche Widerstand gegen den NS-Staat 1933–1945. Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch.

Eine umfassende und facettenreiche Beschreibung des Widerstands gegen den Nationalsozialismus.

Vinke, Hermann (2014): Das kurze Leben der Sophie Scholl. Ravensburg: Ravensburger Buchverlag.

Hier wird das Leben der jungen Sophie Scholl anhand von Tagebucheinträgen, Fotos, Dokumenten, Zeugenberichte und Aussagen ihrer Schwester Inge sehr anschaulich und ergreifend dargestellt.

Internetseiten

<http://www.zeitklicks.de/nationalsozialismus/zeitklicks/zeit/verfolgung/widerstand/wer-leistet-widerstand/>

Auf dieser Homepage für Schüler findet man eine jugendgerechte Darstellung wesentlicher Informationen. Besonders ist hier die Möglichkeit der interaktiven Vernetzung der Themen.

education.cambridge.org/.../opposition_and_resistance_in_nazi_...

Auf der Internetseite der Universität Cambridge findet sich ein kostenloser, knapp 20-seitiger Download zum Thema „Opposition and resistance in Nazi Germany“, ein Auszug aus dem gleichnamigen Werk des britischen Geschichtswissenschaftlers Frank McDonough.

Verlaufsübersicht zur Reihe

1./2. Stunde: To what extent was resistance against the Nazi regime actually possible?

3./4. Stunde: Who resisted the Nazi regime and in what ways did they do so?

Verlaufsübersicht zu den Stunden

1./2. Stunde: To what extent was resistance against the Nazi regime actually possible?

Material	Verlauf
M 1	Democracy vs. dictatorship / Aktivieren von Vorwissen und Motivation anhand zweier Bilder
M 2	Heading towards a dictatorship – the Reichstag Fire Decree / Herausarbeiten erster Maßnahmen der Nationalsozialisten zur Errichtung einer Diktatur anhand eines Auszugs aus dem Gesetz
M 3–M 4	Further steps on the way to a dictatorship / Herausarbeiten weiterer Maßnahmen der Nationalsozialisten zur Errichtung einer Diktatur in arbeitsteiliger Partnerarbeit
M 5	Should we resist against the system? / Erarbeiten eines Rollenspiels, in dem die Möglichkeiten und Gefahren eines möglichen Widerstands thematisiert werden

3./4. Stunde: Who resisted the Nazi regime and in what ways did they do so?

Material	Verlauf
M 6	Resistance against National Socialism / Erteilen der Arbeitsanweisung für das folgende Gruppenpuzzle
M 7–M 10	Jigsaw / Herausarbeiten des Vorgehens und der Motive exemplarischer Widerstandskämpfer in einem Gruppenpuzzle
M 11	Talking about resistance fighters / Sichern der Ergebnisse in den Stammgruppen anhand eines Übersichtsblatts
M 12	A letter from a resistance fighter / Verfassen eines Abschiedsbriefs aus der Sicht eines Mitglieds der Weißen Rose

Materialübersicht**1./2. Stunde:** To what extent was resistance against the Nazi regime actually possible?

- M 1 (Fo) Now and then – political systems in Germany
- M 2 (Tx) Heading towards a dictatorship – the Reichstag Fire Decree
- M 3 (Tx) Further steps on the way to a dictatorship (Partner A)
- M 4 (Tx) Further steps on the way to a dictatorship (Partner B)
- M 5 (Ab) Should Hans and Erna resist against the Nazi regime? – A role play

3./4. Stunde: Who resisted the Nazi regime and in what ways did they do so?

- M 6 (Ab) Resistance movements against National Socialism – a group task
- M 7 (Tx) Johannes Baptist Sproll – resistance of the church
- M 8 (Tx) The Schlotterbeck Group – communist resistance
- M 9 (Tx) The White Rose group – resistance of university students
- M 10 (Tx) Graf von Stauffenberg – resistance from Hitler's former supporters
- M 11 (Ab) Resistance fighters against National Socialism – an overview sheet
- M 12 (Ab) A letter from a resistance fighter

Lernerfolgskontrolle

- M 13 (LEK) Test: Resistance against National Socialism

Ab: Arbeitsblatt – **Fo:** Folie – **LEK:** Lernerfolgskontrolle – **Tx:** Text

M 1 Now and then – political systems in Germany



Photos: 1. Adolf Hitler and the NS leadership saluting during a meeting of the Reichstag, Berlin (1941); 2. speech of Angela Merkel during a meeting of the Bundestag, Berlin (March 2014)

Tasks

1. Describe the two photos.
2. Name the main differences between the political systems shown.

M 3 Further steps on the way to a dictatorship

Partner A

Find out why it got more and more difficult to take actions against the National Socialist Party.

On 23 March 1933, Hitler presented a "Law to Remedy the Distress of the People and the Reich" to the parliament, the so-called "Enabling Act" (Ermächtigungsgesetz). Here is an excerpt:

Law to Remedy the Distress of the People and the Reich

The Reichstag has enacted¹ the following law, which is hereby proclaimed with the assent of the Reichsrat, it having been established that the requirements for a constitutional amendment have been fulfilled:

Article 1. In addition to the procedure prescribed by the constitution, laws of the Reich may also be enacted by the government of the Reich. [...]

Article 2. Laws enacted by the government of the Reich may deviate from the constitution as long as they do not affect the institutions of the Reichstag and the Reichsrat. The rights of the President remain unaffected.

Article 3. Laws enacted by the Reich government shall be issued by the Chancellor and announced in the Reich Gazette. They shall take effect on the day following the announcement. [...]

Source: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1496

In order to come into effect, the "Enabling Act" required a two-thirds majority in the Reichstag, meaning that two-thirds of its members had to vote in favour of it. Therefore, the National Socialists had started promoting the law days before the vote, using terror and threats. SA men arrested political opponents² arbitrarily³. On the day of the vote, the parliament building was surrounded by SA storm troopers. The threatening posture⁴ didn't miss its intended effect: two-thirds of the members of the Reichstag voted in favour of the law and it came into effect on 24 March 1933. Only the Social Democrats voted against the law. The Communists (KPD), who were also expected to vote against it, couldn't attend the sitting because they had already been arrested under the Reichstag Fire Decree or were fleeing the Nazis.



Original document where the Enabling Act was published, Germany (1933)

Annotations

1 **to enact sth.:** etw. erlassen, etw. beschließen – 2 **opponent:** der/die Gegner/-in – 3 **arbitrarily:** willkürlich – 4 **threatening posture:** die drohende Haltung, die Drohgebärde

Tasks



Work on your own. Take notes on the following tasks:

1. Read the text and the source carefully.
 - a) Complete the sentence: The Enabling Act enabled ...
 - b) Explain why two-thirds of the members of the Reichstag voted for this bill.
2. Explain the importance of this act with reference to the establishment of a dictatorship.



Work with a partner. Take notes on your results.

3. Explain your acts to each other (task 1 and 2).
4. Evaluate the remaining legal possibilities of political opponents to prevent a dictatorship.

M 5 Should Hans and Erna resist against the Nazi regime? – A role play

This task sheet will help you to prepare a role play between two friends during the Nazi regime.

The situation

Imagine you are Hans and his neighbour Erna, two citizens of the German Reich. You are very sceptical towards the Nazi party and have watched their seizure of power very carefully. You understand that you barely have any rights anymore. Now you ask yourself: **“Should you resist the Nazi regime or remain silent?”** While Hans wants to resist, Erna wants to remain silent because she fears the consequences.

Part I: Work on your own.

Together with your partner, decide who will get which role. Then each of you prepares their role (Hans or Erna) by taking notes.

Include the following aspects:

- The political situation: What is your opinion on the suspension of your fundamental rights?
- The dangers of an illegal resistance: What could happen to you and your family?

Time: ____ minutes

Part II: Work with your partner.

Practise the dialogue with your partner.

Time: ____ minutes

Part III: Present your role play.

Act out the role play in front of the class.



M 8 The Schlotterbeck Group – communist resistance

Group B

Here you can find out more about the Schlotterbeck Group from Stuttgart, who were communists and avowed¹ opponents of the Nazi regime.

„Das ist die Geschichte der Ausrottung meiner Familie. [...] Weil sie den einfachsten Idealen der Menschlichkeit treu blieben! Weil die Söhne einer alten Mutter sich nicht dem Joch der Tyrannei beugten – musste die Mutter sterben! Weil die Söhne eines Vaters dem Geiste des Rechtes und der Freiheit, in dem sie erzogen wären, treu blieben – musste der alte Vater sterben. Weil wir es wagten, dem Verderben unseres Volkes zu trotzen – musste die Schwester sterben! Weil einige den Krallen der allmächtigen Gestapo entwichen – musste die ganze Schar der ihnen nahestehenden Menschen sterben! [...]“

Source: Friedrich Schlotterbeck: Wegen Vorbereitung zum Hochverrat hingerichtet (1947)



Friedrich Schlotterbeck (around 1930)

The Schlotterbeck Group from Stuttgart consisted of the Schlotterbeck family – father Gotthilf, mother Maria, daughter Gertrud, sons Hermann and Friedrich – and their supporters Else Himmelheber, Friedrich’s fiancée, Erich Heinser, Emil Gärtner, Sofie Klenk, Karl Stäbler and Theodor, Hermann and Emmi Seitz. All members of the group were active communists, who supported the interests of the working class. Their resistance started very early, immediately after the Nazi party came to power. They worked non-violently and secretly against the Nazi regime, for example by distributing leaflets², organising meetings and trying to convince their fellow citizens to resist. For their non-violent resistance and their opposing political attitude, the group members were persecuted³ by the Nazi regime and suffered violent measures.

Quelle: Verein der Verfolgten des Naziregimes

Here are two examples. Metalworker Gotthilf Schlotterbeck was arrested in 1933 and imprisoned in different concentration camps near Stuttgart (“Heuberg” and “Kuhberg”) until 1936, where he became ill because of the bad living conditions. After his release, he remained a protective custody⁴ prisoner. Like his father, Friedrich Schlotterbeck was also arrested in 1933. First he was interrogated and tortured⁵ by the Gestapo, then imprisoned in a concentration camp in Colditz near Leipzig. Afterwards he was in prison for three years and, until 1943, he spent six years in a different concentration camp in Welzheim near Stuttgart.

In May 1944, the family was betrayed by Eugen Nesper, an acquaintance from their political work before 1933. Eugen worked as an informer for the Gestapo and was ordered to find out more about the communist resistance. After he had admitted his betrayal⁶ to the group, they separated and tried to flee to Switzerland. Friedrich was the only one who made it. The others were captured, arrested and imprisoned in the Gestapo headquarters in Stuttgart, where they were interrogated and tortured for months. They didn’t reveal any details of their connections or underground activities.



Memorial plaque in Stuttgart

Foto: Charlotte Kellner

On 27 November 1944, Gotthilf, Maria, Gertrud, Else, Erich, Emil, Sofie, Emmi and Hermann (Seitz) were transported to Dachau concentration camp. On 30 November, they were shot dead without trial⁷. After months of arrest, hunger and torture in a concentration camp, Hermann Schlotterbeck was shot in the forest near Riedlingen on 19 April 1945. Theodor Seitz was beheaded in the prison of Halle on 6 February 1945. Friedrich was the only survivor. He came back to Stuttgart after the war and moved to the GDR⁸, where he was a member of the Socialist Unity Party (SED). He died in Berlin in 1979.

Text: Charlotte Kellner

Annotations

1 **avowed**: bekennend, erklärt – 2 **to distribute leaflets**: Flugblätter verteilen – 3 **to persecute so.:** jmdn. verfolgen – 4 **protective custody**: die Schutzhaft – 5 **to torture so.:** jmdn. foltern – 6 **betrayal**: der Verrat – 7 **trial**: der Prozess – 8 **GDR (German Democratic Republic)**: die DDR

M 9 The White Rose group – resistance of university students

Group C

Here you can find out more about the White Rose resistance group of Munich, who were young university students and avowed opponents of the Nazi regime.

The White Rose was an intellectual resistance group, which acted non-violently. The group consisted of five students from the University of Munich, the siblings Hans and Sophie Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, Willi Graf and Christoph Probst as well as the professor of philosophy Kurt Huber.



Hans and Sophie Scholl, Christoph Probst (right), 1942

The group wrote six leaflets¹ in total, in which they denounced the Nazi regime's crimes, especially the mass murder of the Jews. They also called for active resistance and support in their fight for freedom of speech and religion as well as protection of the citizens from the criminal actions of the state. In their texts, they tried to appeal to academic people, who they thought could easily be convinced. Therefore they quoted, for example, from Aristotle and Goethe. In total, the members and their supporters distributed about 15,000 copies of the leaflets in Munich and, later on, in other cities, such as Hamburg and Freiburg. They left the leaflets, for example, in public phone booths, university corridors or mailed them to professors and students.

© Picture Alliance

The group started their activities in Munich in June 1942, when Hans and Alexander came back from the front, where they had learned about the mass murder of the Jews. They wanted to take action and wrote the first four leaflets during the following weeks. In autumn 1942, Sophie, and shortly after, Willi, Christoph and Kurt joined the group.

„Ist es nicht so, daß sich jeder ehrliche Deutsche heute seine Regierung schämt, und wer von uns ahnt das Ausmaß der Schmach, die über uns und unsere Kinder kommen wird, wenn einst [...] die grauenvollsten [...] Verbrechen ans Tageslicht treten? (1. Flugblatt der Weißen Rose)

[S]eit der Eroberung Polens [sind] dreihunderttausend Juden [...] auf bestialischste Art ermordet worden [...]. Und wieder schläft das deutsche Volk in seinem stumpfen, blöden Schlaf weiter und gibt diesen faschistischen Verbrechern Mut und Gelegenheit, weiterzutöten –, und diese tun es. [Ein] jeder ist schuldig, schuldig, schuldig. (2. Flugblatt)

Ist Euer Geist schon so sehr der Vergewaltigung unterlegen, daß Ihr vergeßt, daß es nicht nur Euer Recht, sondern Eure sittliche Pflicht ist, dieses System zu beseitigen? (3. Flugblatt)“

Source: <http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/nationalsozialismus/weisse-rose/61008/die-flugblaetter-im-wortlaut>

In January 1943, the fifth leaflet was printed and distributed. When the defeat² of the German troops at Stalingrad became official, they sent out their sixth leaflet. It was smuggled to the UK. In July 1943, Allied planes dropped millions of copies of it over Germany. In February 1943, Schmorell, Scholl, and Graf had an anonymous graffiti campaign and wrote phrases like “Down with Hitler” and “Freedom” on the walls of the university and other buildings in Munich.

On 18 February 1943, the Scholls threw leaflets down into the empty corridors of the university so that the students could find them after their lectures. The maintenance man saw this and betrayed³ the siblings. Hans and Sophie were taken into Gestapo custody. To protect the other members of the group, Hans and Sophie confessed⁴.

On 22 February 1943, the Scholls and Probst stood trial⁵, they were found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. They were executed the same day at Stadelheim Prison in Munich. In a second trial, which took place on 19 April 1943, Graf, Huber and Schmorell were sentenced to death. Schmorell and Huber were executed⁶ on 13 July 1943 and Graf on 12 October 1943.

Text: Charlotte Kellner

Annotations

1 **leaflet**: das Flugblatt – 2 **defeat**: die Niederlage – 3 **to betray so.:** jmdn. verraten – 4 **to confess**: gestehen – 5 **trial**: der Prozess – 6 **to execute so.:** jmdn. hinrichten

M 10 Graf von Stauffenberg – resistance from Hitler’s former supporters

Group D

Here you can find out more about the key player in the assassination attempt¹ against Hitler on July 1944.



Colonel Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg (1944)

Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg was an officer in the German *Wehrmacht*. He was born in Jettingen in Bavaria on 15 November 1907 and grew up with his two brothers in Stuttgart. Stauffenberg started his military service in 1926 just after finishing his *Abitur*. He became a commissioned officer and was promoted to second lieutenant in Bamberg in 1930. In 1933 he married Nina Freiin von Lerchenfeld and they had two daughters and three sons.

From 1938 onwards, Stauffenberg took part in various military operations. At first he was a supporter of Adolf Hitler and since 1943 had even belonged to the staff of his closest officers. Over time, however, he became disillusioned with Hitler. In 1942 he joined the resistance movement within the armed forces. In a military operation in Africa on 7 April 1943 Stauffenberg was seriously injured, losing his left eye, his right hand and two fingers of his left hand.

© Picture Alliance

- 15 Back in Germany he worked to organise an assassination attempt on Hitler. He and his accomplices called it “Operation Valkyrie”. They wanted to kill Hitler by planting a bomb for him. The operation aimed to prevent a world war with many losses² and what they anticipate³ would end up as a defeat. Through Operation Valkyrie they wanted to overthrow⁵ the Nazi Party. The conspirators⁶ hoped to frame soldiers of the *Waffen-SS* as responsible for the assassination, have them arrested and have National Socialists replaced in key positions. Because Hitler was protected by bodyguards, it was difficult to get close enough to make an attempt on his life. Colonel Stauffenberg, however, had access to Hitler’s meetings.

25 “Es ist Zeit, daß jetzt etwas getan wird. Derjenige allerdings, der etwas zu tun wagt, muß sich bewußt sein, daß er wohl als Verräter in die deutsche Geschichte eingehen wird. Unterläßt er jedoch die Tat, dann wäre er ein Verräter vor seinem eigenen Gewissen.“ Stauffenberg in a conversation (July 1944)

Source: Kramarz, Joachim (1965): Claus Graf Stauffenberg. 15. November 1907–20. Juli 1944. Das Leben eines Offiziers. Frankfurt a. M.: Heyne.

- 30 On 21 July 1944 Stauffenberg left a bomb in a suitcase close to Hitler in a meeting in his headquarters (“Wolfsschanze”) in Eastern Prussia. The bomb exploded, killing and injuring many people in the room. Hitler, however, was only slightly injured.

Stauffenberg was quickly arrested and was executed⁷ on either 20 or 21 July 1944 in Berlin.

Text: Manuel Köhler, Gus Simons



Hitler’s headquarters “Wolfsschanze” after the detonation of the bomb, Eastern Prussia (20 July 1944)

© Bundesarchiv, Bild-Nr.: 146-1972-025-10

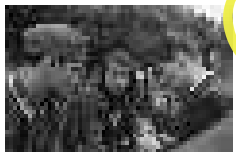
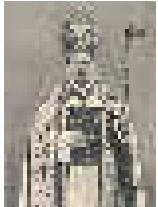
Annotations

1 **assasination attempt**: das Attentat – 2 **loss**: der Verlust (an Soldaten und Zivilisten) – 3 **to anticipate sth.**: etw. erwarten, etw. voraussehen – 4 **defeat**: die Niederlage – 5 **to overthrow sth.**: etw. stürzen, etw. zu Fall bringen – 6 **conspirator**: der/die Verschwörer/-in – 7 **to execute so**: jmdn. hinrichten

M 11 Resistance fighters against National Socialism – an overview sheet

Get an overview of the resistance fighters the other groups have worked on.

<p>1. a) Name: _____</p> <p>b) Other important facts: _____</p> <p>c) Motives: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>d) Actions: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>e) Consequences of the actions: _____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>2. a) Name: _____</p> <p>b) Other important facts: _____</p> <p>c) Motives: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>d) Actions: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>e) Consequences of the actions: _____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>3. a) Name: _____</p> <p>b) Other important facts: _____</p> <p>c) Motives: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>d) Actions: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>e) Consequences of the actions: _____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>4. a) Name: _____</p> <p>b) Other important facts: _____</p> <p>c) Motives: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>d) Actions: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>e) Consequences of the actions: _____</p> <p>_____</p>



RESISTANCE