



Voices from the Resistance

**VOICES FROM THE RESISTANCE
CURRICULUM GUIDE**

Applause! Series
CIVIC CENTER OF GREATER DES MOINES
OCTOBER 28-30, 2009

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Voices from the Resistance examines the lives of five European resistance fighters: Marianne from France, Helen from Norway, Catherine Senesh from Hungary (speaking for her daughter Hannah), Sophie Scholl from Germany (representing herself and her brother Hans), and Lucie Aubrac from France. None of these women knew each other, but Pippa White has woven their stories together to give audiences a glimpse of how resistance efforts in World War II contributed to the Allies' victory.

Resistance fighters worked in different ways to end Nazi control, and if their activities were discovered, they faced arrest, torture, and even death. The five characters in **Voices from the Resistance** represent a variety of resistance efforts. Marianne makes false identity cards, delivers resistance mail, and escapes from the Nazis on more than one occasion. Helen risks her life to help Jews escape. Hannah (whose story is told by her mother, Catherine) engages in real guerilla warfare and is captured. Sophie and her brother Hans are appalled by what is happening in their own country (Germany) and begin distributing anti-war propaganda throughout Europe. Finally, Lucie fights to free her husband, a Jew, who had been sentenced to death for his work in the resistance. All of these characters really lived, and their stories, as portrayed by Pippa White, are true.

The resistance movement in World War II had a huge impact on the victory of the Allies. Resistance fighters were dedicated, passionate and courageous individuals. **Voices from the Resistance** tells their true stories.



Hannah Senesh. Photo courtesy of The Center for Online Judaic Studies.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Pippa White is in her fourteenth year as a solo performer. She calls her One's Company Productions "part theatre, part storytelling, part history." She has toured in twenty-seven states and has performed at colleges, conferences, museums, libraries, festivals, and performing arts centers. Pippa is the only artist to be featured for eight consecutive years at the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines as part of the Applause! Series. Pippa has a BA in English from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She offers workshops and residencies and has been a teaching artist with the Arts Are Basic Program (associated with the College of Fine and Performing Arts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln) and the Nebraska Arts Council for seventeen years. Before becoming a solo performer, she worked extensively in theatre and television on the West Coast, including five years as the host of a daily morning television show in San Francisco.

REVIEW: A BRIEF HISTORY OF WWII*

European Theater

The war in Europe began in September 1939 when Germany, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, invaded Poland. Britain and France responded by declaring war on Germany but took little action over the following months. In 1940, Germany launched its next initiative by attacking Denmark and Norway, followed shortly thereafter by attacks on Belgium, the Netherlands, and France. All of these nations were conquered rapidly.

Later in the summer of 1940, Germany launched a further attack on Britain, this time exclusively from the air. The Battle of Britain was Germany's first military failure, as the German air force, the Luftwaffe, was never able to overcome Britain's Royal Air Force. As Hitler plotted his next steps, Italy, an ally of Germany, expanded the war even further by invading Greece and North Africa. The Greek campaign was a failure, and Germany was forced to come to Italy's assistance in early 1941.

Later in 1941, Germany began its most ambitious action yet by invading the Soviet Union. Although the Germans initially made swift progress and advanced deep into the Russian heartland, the invasion of the USSR would prove to be the downfall of Germany's war effort. Although the Soviet Union's initial resistance was weak, the nation's strength and determination, combined with its brutal winters, were eventually more than the German army could overcome. In 1943, after the battles of Stalingrad and Kursk, Germany was forced into a full-scale retreat. During the course of 1944, the Germans were slowly but steadily driven out of Soviet territory. The Russians then pursued the Germans across Eastern Europe and into Germany itself in 1945.

In June 1944, British and American forces launched the D-Day invasion, landing in German-occupied France via the coast of Normandy. Soon the German army was forced into retreat from the western front, as well. By early 1945, Allied forces were closing in on Germany from both east and west. The Soviets were the first to reach the German capital of Berlin, and Germany surrendered in May 1945, shortly after the suicide of Adolf Hitler.

Pacific Theater

The war in the Pacific began on December 7, 1941 when warplanes from Japan, a German ally, launched a surprise attack on the U.S. Navy base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. By this time, Japan had already been at war with China for several years and had seized the Chinese territory of Manchuria. After the Pearl Harbor attack, Japan began a massive campaign of expansion throughout the Southeast Asia-Pacific region.

Although the Pearl Harbor attack provoked a declaration of war by the United States on Japan the very next day, it was several months before U.S. forces engaged Japan in significant military combat. In late spring of 1942, the United States and Japan fought a series of naval battles, climaxing in the Battle of Midway on June 3–6, 1942, in which Japan suffered a catastrophic defeat.

By the late spring of 1945, most of Japan's conquests had been liberated, and Allied forces were closing in on the Japanese home islands. As they neared Japan proper, the Allies began heavy bombing campaigns against major Japanese cities, including Tokyo. This process continued through the summer of 1945 until finally, in early August, the United States dropped two atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Stunned by the unexpected devastation, Japan surrendered a few days later.

**as appears in the World War II section of SparkNotes.com*

THE RESISTANCE FIGHTERS

When most people think of war, they envision soldiers and battlefields. War, however, is fought on many fronts by different people, including soldiers, spies, medical personnel, scientists, entertainers, writers, and surprisingly, ordinary citizens. These ordinary citizens are civilian resisters—individuals under enemy rule willing to do what they can to weaken the imposed government's control. Civilian resisters may not confront their enemy on a battlefield, but they do "resist" whenever possible.

Few people in Europe during World War II willingly accepted Nazi rule. There were resistance movements in every European country. The most prevalent form of resistance during World War II was helping Jews escape, and those resisters who aided Jews risked execution if their actions were discovered. Other forms of resistance occurred through organizations with hundreds, even thousands of members contributing in various ways to defeat the Nazis. These resisters collected and distributed information, sabotaged Nazi plans and activities, published illegal newspapers, helped escaped soldiers, and engaged in guerrilla warfare. Resisters also used their occupations to oppose Nazi rule. Many of those forced to work in the Nazi war industry "resisted" by doing poor quality work. Twelve thousand teachers in Norway went on strike rather than teach a revised history of Norway written by the German-imposed puppet government. When the Germans moved into Denmark, Danish naval captains either escaped to Sweden or sank their ships. Finally, resistance resulted from small but significant actions, such as holding a forbidden religious service, singing a national anthem, or keeping a diary.

Resistance fighters worked tirelessly and faced tremendous risks. They were young and old, men and women, children and people from all socioeconomic groups. One resistance fighter said, "We all thought alike. The Nazis were there and something had to be done."



Member of the French resistance setting an explosive charge to a railway line. Photo courtesy of the Imperial War Museum.



Bridge in Haute-Savoie, France, destroyed by French resistance fighters. Photo courtesy of the Imperial War Museum.

VOCABULARY

Allies: the group of nations, including the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union, that fought against Germany and other Axis countries during World War II

Axis: the group of nations, including Germany, Italy, and Japan, that fought against the Allies during World War II

clandestine: marked by, held in, or conducted with secrecy

espionage: the practice of spying or using spies to obtain information about plans and activities, especially of a foreign government or competing company

Fuhrer: German word for “leader,” and one of the titles that Hitler preferred

Gestapo: the German Secret State Police

guerilla: a person who engages in irregular warfare, especially as a member of an independent unit carrying out harassment and sabotage

Hitler Youth: a Nazi youth group established in 1926 and expanded throughout Hitler’s rule; membership was mandatory after 1939

Lily Marlene: a wartime song popular with both sides

partisans: irregular forces which use guerrilla tactics when operating in enemy-occupied territory

Resistante: French word for resistance fighter

sabotage: an act or process tending to hamper or hurt; destructive or obstructive action carried out by a civilian or enemy agent to hinder a nation’s war effort

underground: organized group acting in secrecy to oppose government or, during war, to resist occupying enemy forces

White Rose: a group of students and a professor at the University of Munich who advocated for nonviolent resistance of Nazi Germany by writing and distributing anonymous leaflets



From left: Hans Scholl, Sophie Scholl, Christopher Probst—members of the White Rose resistance organization. Photo courtesy of the Jewish Virtual Library.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Pre-Show Discussion

1. In your study of WWII, what have you learned about resistance fighters? What is your understanding of the role that resistance movements played in WWII?
2. Based on your knowledge of resistance fighters, would you have joined a resistance movement during WWII? If so, how would you have participated?

Post-Show Discussion

1. Why do you think Pippa White chose to weave the stories of the five characters together throughout the performance? Was this technique effective? Would the performance have been more or less emotional if each story had been told separately?
 2. How did the various forms of resistance during WWII contribute to the Allies' victory? Have there been resistance movements in more recent wars? If so, what does such resistance look like?
 3. Can resistance movements exist outside of a war setting? Why or why not?
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POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES*

1. Imagine that you are a Resistance fighter during World War II. Keep a diary or a journal of your clandestine activities, describe the dangers you face, and explain how your activities help the war effort.
2. Design a monument or memorial to members of a Resistance movement that effectively conveys the courage and sacrifice of those brave men and women.

*as developed by *The History Channel Classroom Study Guides (Great Escapes of WWII, Part 2)*



French resistance fighters in Haute-Savoie, France, 1944.
Photo courtesy of the Imperial War Museum.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Related Web Sites

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0001288.html>. Detailed information on WWII presented in chronological order with link to specific events.

<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/pacificwar/index.html>. Photos of U.S. soldiers in World War II. Some photos and captions are graphic and should be used with discretion.

<http://www.history.com/content/worldwartwo>. Synopsis of key WWII events, including photos, videos, speeches, and battle maps.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/>. Explanation of WWII, in-depth articles, maps, videos, and timelines.

<http://www.ushmm.org/education/forstudents/resource/>. Website of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Includes areas of study, online exhibits, activities, and resources. Some material is graphic and should be used with discretion.

Literature

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry, 1990. The story, based on facts and set in Denmark during World War II, tells of the country's efforts to save their Jewish citizens.

Sky: A True Story of Resistance During World War II by Hanneke Ippisch, 1996. This is the true story of a Dutch girl who was a teenager when the Germans invaded her rural village. She was captured when she was caught helping Jewish citizens. She tells of her captivity and how she continued to help the resistance movement. Photos are included.

Hidden on the Mountain: Stories of Children Sheltered from the Nazis in Le Chambon by DeSaix, Deborah Durland and Ruelle, Karen Gray, 2007. This is a photo essay for middle school and high school students. It tells the story of thousands of children who were found hidden in the mountain to escape the Germans.

Emil and Karl by Yankev Glatshteyn, 2006. This is the story of two boys living in Vienna before World War II. It provides a chilling portrait of a world overcome with cruelty and danger and tells of two boys helped by the resistance movement.

Yellow Star by Jennifer Roy, 2006. Only 12 children survived the Lodz ghetto, and Roy's aunt Sylvia was one of them. For 50 years, Sylvia kept her experience to herself: "It was something nobody talked about." The author always avoided Holocaust history; when she was growing up, there was no Holocaust curriculum or discussion--just images of atrocities, piles of bones, and skeletal survivors being liberated. But a few years ago, Roy's aunt began to talk about Lodz, and based on taped phone interviews, Roy wrote her story. Each section begins with a brief historical introduction. There is a detailed time line at the end of the book.

Escaping Into the Night by Dina D. Friedman, 2006. When Nazis take her mother, Halina, 13, escapes to the forest, where she struggles to survive with 300 other Jews. Based on historical events, Halina's story captures her exciting escape and survival adventure, while never denying the horror. The story does not idealize the refugees or their rescuers, who fight among themselves in the struggle to survive. The author's first-person account brings teens close to a part of Holocaust history seldom told.

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Voices from the Resistance

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Study Guide

History Classroom. <http://www.history.com/content/classroom>.

Holocaust Education & Archive Research Team. <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org>.

Merriam-Webster Online. <http://www.merriam-webster.com>.

SparkNotes: World War II (1939-1945). <http://www.sparknotes.com/history/european/ww2/>.

A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust. <http://fcit.usf.edu/HOLOCAUST>.

Support for Civic Center education program and the *Applause! Series* is provided by:

Alliant Energy, American Republic Insurance Company, Bradford and Sally Austin, Bank of America, Citigroup Foundation, Continental Western Group, EMC Insurance Companies, Jules and Judy Gray, Greater Des Moines Community Foundation, John Deere Des Moines Operations, Richard and Deborah McConnell, Pioneer Hi-Bred - a DuPont business, Polk County, Prairie Meadows Community Betterment Grant, Target, U.S. Bank, Wells Fargo & Co., Willis Auto Campus/Lexus of North America, and the more than 200 individual donors.

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