

Book Review by Ingrid

Book Review: *The Boys Who Challenged Hitler* by Philip Hoose

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The nonfiction novel *The Boys Who Challenged Hitler*, written by Philip Hoose, tells the tale of a group of Danish boys against the Nazis Regime in their country Denmark. These boys, whom they called themselves The Churchill Club, named after Winston Churchill. This club inspired not only their city Copenhagen, but their country in general to fight back against the regime, ultimately clearing out all the Nazis and Third Reich business. By beginning with small defying acts, such as stealing Nazi guns and ammunition, these adolescents soon began sabotaging all German advances in Denmark, thus causing delays even Hitler had to personally address. However, their attacks would soon be stopped, as they were caught and imprisoned. Fortunately, word spread of their brave and rebellious actions across Denmark, and soon, many versions of The Churchill Club began continuing their acts in hopes of clearing out all the Nazis.

This novel displays the point of view given by young teenage boys, which many readers can relate and understand to. Many Holocaust books were in the feet of adults, victims, and many other very relevant people. However, this book was in the feet of juvenile Danish boys, of which the Nazis had no problem with. This club went out of their own way to get rid of the Germans, of which there is no other record of any group of teenagers doing at the time. This book is the most blatant display of bravery and leadership, as many leaders nowadays fail to rise to the challenge as The Churchill Club did. Additionally, this book also shows the concept of a chain reaction. Despite their young age and seemingly simple acts of defiance, it was this group of boys that inspired an entire country to turn on the Regime. Even small acts can go a long way, no matter how simple or insignificant they seem to be.

What I enjoyed most about the book was how unique the standpoint was. I truly never expected to see a group of boys, especially from the idealistic race in Hitler's eyes, to turn against the Regime. I have read many books concerning the Holocaust, such as *The Diary of a Young Girl*, concerning Anne Frank, but this was the first time I have read a novel about 'idolized' nation' boys revolting and going out of their own way to fight the Nazis, even if nobody else did. It was truly a spectacle, and kept me engaged and excited as I read on.

While there is much to enjoy about this novel, there were some parts I felt that were rather slow and random, despite this being direct photos and quotes from the actual members of the club. During their imprisonment, their thoughts and actions seemed unnecessary, and I do not think they needed to be added to the novel. In fact, most events that occurred in the prison I felt did not need to be added at all, as it did not move the storyline along in the slightest.

All in all, this novel is the raw telling of a unique point of view of the Holocaust. Despite their young age, these boys were the first in their entire country of Denmark to defy the Nazis, and while they were caught, they ignited a chain reaction from the people, which ultimately cleared out all remnants of the Regime. This book displays a sense of bravery through the telling of adolescents, which can relate to adolescent readers. Although there were many lessons throughout this novel, none were so strong as the concept of small acts can go a long way, no matter how simple or insignificant they seem to be.