

## Non-violence and WW2

*Non-violence in World War Two* provides in depth consideration of the little know but fascinating stories of non-violent resistance to the Nazi occupation in Norway and Denmark. It also looks at the non-violent resistance of students, women and Christians to Nazi oppression in Germany itself.

### Task/Exercises

These studies would be suitable for research for **historical enquiries at GCSE and GCE A Levels** with the section on Germany supporting the tackling of questions relating to the effectiveness of Nazi control in Germany between 1933 and 1945 and internal opposition movements; questions that are asked within **GCSE German History units**.

### NON-VIOLENCE IN WORLD WAR 2: NORWAY THE TEACHERS' STORY

This worksheet may be used alongside the extensive information about non-violence in Denmark and Norway which is located on the *Peace Pledge Union website* within the section *Study and Teaching Resources*:

[http://ppu.org.uk/infodocs/nvww2/ww2\\_non-violence\\_intro.html](http://ppu.org.uk/infodocs/nvww2/ww2_non-violence_intro.html)

#### Non-violent action

There are many examples of non-violent action being taken against injustice or for a cause. The Civil Rights Movement in the USA, led by Martin Luther King, which sought political equality for black Americans, is a good example.

**Indicate below if you can think of any other examples of the use of non violent action against injustice or for a cause:**

- .....
- .....

#### Non-violent Response to War

In Norway and Denmark during World War 2 large sections of the population took non-violent action together to resist the armed Nazi German invading force.

#### Invasion and Occupation

Following the invasion of Norway in April 1940 the Norwegian army provided armed resistance to the German army but on 9 June they surrendered.

All aspects of ordinary life are affected by war and occupation and even Norwegian children's milk was being diverted to the occupying Germany Army

**Protest**

All sorts of ways of protesting against the German occupiers were used. These included:

- Underground newspapers being printed urging non co-operation
- People wearing badges and bracelets signifying opposition
- Protest strikes that led to the execution of Trade Union leaders
- Non violent demonstrations for example one day everyone stayed at home leaving all public places deserted
- Professional people, Judges, Church leaders, Sportsmen and women, medical professional resigning on mass in opposition to Nazi interference.

*What is your view of non-violent protest? When should it be used?*

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

**Attack upon the Education System**

In 1942 the Germans and the Norwegian Nazi puppet government tried to promote Nazi ideals through the schools:

- Portraits of the Norwegian Nazi party leader were hung on school walls and anyone who removed them would be punished.
- Textbooks were to be revised to conform with Nazi Views
- Teachers must educate their pupils in Nazism
- All children aged between 10 and 18 years had to join a Nazi Youth Movement
- Teachers were expected to join a new Nazi oriented Teachers' Association, if not they would lose their jobs and pensions.

**If you were a teacher in Norway in 1942 what would you do in these circumstances?**

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**The Teachers' Action**

Through their underground association the teachers decided to write an identical letter to the Education Department rejecting membership of the new association.

Of the 14000 teachers in Norway 12000 of them rejected the Nazi Government's demand.

In addition lawyers, the medical profession, churchmen and factory workers all acted non-violently to prevent Norway being turned into a Nazi state. Although, later superseded by armed resistance the non-violent movement was comparatively successful and universally supported.

**What do you think made Norway's non-violent resistance movement possible?**

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**Does the Norwegian experience provide lessons for the rest of the world?**

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### **The Consequences**

There were serious consequences for some teachers taking part in this non violent protest action:

- Over 1300 teachers were arrested and put into concentration camps outside Oslo
- 700 were selected for forced labour in the Arctic alongside Russian POWs
- Following significant hardships some teachers gave in but 499 stood by their principles and ended up in the Arctic unloading supply ships in very difficult conditions
- The Authorities were unable to enforce the new Teachers' Association and eventually the deported teachers were released and returned as heroes.

### **NON VIOLENCE IN WORLD WAR 2 DENMARK**

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#### **Non-violent action**

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***violent action against injustice or for a cause:***

- .....
- .....

***Non-violent Response to War***

In Norway and Denmark during World War 2 large sections of the population took non-violent action together to resist the armed Nazi German invading force.

**Ultimatum**

In April 1940 following an incursion of German troops into Denmark the Danish Government, did not mobilise the army and without fighting, accepted German military occupation.

*What is your view of the Danish government's response to the German invasion?*

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- .....
- .....
- .....

**Protest**

All sorts of ways of protesting against the German occupiers were used. These included:

- V for victory and other graffiti being daubed all over Denmark
- Campaign of passive resistance in the Media including illegal underground newspapers
- Acts of sabotage
- Factory and office go slows
- Workers riots

The Germans "cracked down" on opposition and large-scale arrests ensued, Danish military establishments were attacked although Danish servicemen did not resist arrest. Naval vessels escaped to Sweden or were scuttled.

*Which other groups in Denmark you think the Nazis would try and crack down on?*

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

The Danish government resigned and martial law was imposed but without carnage occurring

### **Rescuing the Jews**

In 1940 Denmark was home to about 8000 Jews. In 1943 the Nazis planned to carry out a large-scale raid on Denmark to quietly and secretly deport the Jews. On finding out about the raid, the following action took place:

- The message about the raid was urgently spread by word of mouth
- Jews quietly and secretly departed from their homes
- Danes everywhere helped
- Hiding places found in hospitals, houses, town flats, farms
- Students, newspaper staff, shopkeepers, lawyers and police organised rescue teams
- Jews were then helped to reach safety in Sweden

In all 7220 Jews escaped to Sweden.

**Denmark was the only country in occupied Europe which managed to save the lives of most of its Jewish Population. Why do you think this was the case?**

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**Do you think this strategy of non violent resistance could have been successful implemented any where else in occupied Europe, giving reasons for your statement below:**

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