



## The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Pedersen and the Churchill Club (Bccb Blue Ribbon Nonfiction Book Award (Awards))

By Phillip Hoose

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At the outset of World War II, Denmark did not resist German occupation. Deeply ashamed of his nation's leaders, fifteen-year-old Knud Pedersen resolved with his brother and a handful of schoolmates to take action against the Nazis if the adults would not. Naming their secret club after the fiery British leader, the young patriots in the Churchill Club committed countless acts of sabotage, infuriating the Germans, who eventually had the boys tracked down and arrested. But their efforts were not in vain: the boys' exploits and eventual imprisonment helped spark a full-blown Danish resistance. Interweaving his own narrative with the recollections of Knud himself, here is Phillip Hoose's inspiring story of these young war heroes.

This thoroughly-researched and documented book can be worked into multiple aspects of the common core curriculum.

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*By Phillip Hoose*

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**The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Pedersen and the Churchill Club (Bccb Blue Ribbon Nonfiction Book Award (Awards))** By Phillip Hoose **Bibliography**

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**Editorial Review**

From School Library Journal

Gr 9 Up—In April 1940, occupying German forces made Denmark a "protectorate" of the Third Reich. The Danish government accepted the occupation, but a small group of teen boys, angry at their nation's cowardice, formed the secret Churchill Club to resist the Germans and conducted a six-month spree of sabotage and destruction. Incorporating lengthy first-person reminiscences of one of the group's leaders, Knud Pedersen, Hoose describes how the club recruited members, exploited their youth and innocent looks to deceive their parents and the Germans, appropriated weapons, and carried out guerilla-style attacks from their bicycles. Although the boys were eventually arrested and imprisoned, their exploits made them national heroes, shamed many adults, and fueled Danish resistance. After the war, Winston Churchill honored their efforts. The book is well organized, effectively integrating Pedersen's vivid descriptions of his group's motives, determination, and sometimes foolhardy bravery within the larger narrative, which includes information about Denmark, the war, and the boys' families and lives. Sidebars, detailed maps, and period photos supplement the text. Often reading like a thriller, this title puts a human face on the often-overlooked Danish Resistance and complements titles such as Michael Burgan's *Refusing to Crumble: The Danish Resistance in World War II* (Compass Pt., 2010) and Ellen Levine's *Darkness over Denmark: The Danish Resistance and the Rescue of the Jews* (Holiday House, 2000). VERDICT A captivating work that will appeal to many readers.—Mary Mueller, Rolla Public Schools, MO

Review

**A Booklist Editors' Choice • A Kirkus Reviews Best Book of the Year and Best Teen Book of the Year • A School Library Journal Best Book of the Year • A New York Public Library Notable**

"These teenagers risked all-and lost much . . . This energetic work of nonfiction . . . will cheer the hearts of readers whatever their age." *?The Wall Street Journal*

"An outstanding addition to the WWII canon . . . Hoose brilliantly weaves Pedersen's own words into the larger narrative of Denmark's stormy social and political wartime climate." *?The Horn Book*, starred review

"Often reading like a thriller, this title puts a human face on the often-overlooked Danish Resistance . . . Captivating." *?School Library Journal*, starred review

"Their story is one of bravery in the face of constant danger and of increasingly meaningful acts of sabotage . . . An important and unforgettable book that adds a significant chapter to the history of WWII." *?Booklist*, starred review

"[An] inspiring account." *?Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"Hoose tells this largely unknown story with passion and clarity . . . A superbly told, remarkable true story." *?Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

"What an edge-of-your-seat narrative it is-and even more compelling for teen readers, who are the same age as the real-life protagonists." *?The Bulletin*, starred review

“A rousing real-life adventure tale.” ?*Christian Science Monitor*

#### About the Author

**Phillip Hoose** is an award-winning author of books, essays, stories, songs and articles. Although he first wrote for adults, he turned his attention to children and young adults in part to keep up with his own daughters. His book *Claudette Colvin* won a National Book Award and was dubbed a *Publisher's Weekly* Best Book of 2009. He is also the author of *Hey, Little Ant*, co-authored by his daughter, Hannah, *It's Our World, Too!*, *The Race to Save the Lord God Bird*, and *We Were There, Too!*, a National Book Award finalist. He has received a Jane Addams Children's Book Award, a Christopher Award, and a Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, among numerous honors. He was born in South Bend, Indiana, and grew up in the towns of South Bend, Angola, and Speedway, Indiana. He was educated at Indiana University and the Yale School of Forestry. He lives in Portland, Maine.

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