HISTORY

German Resistance to Hitler
Edward Towne MA MSt PGCE

Lecture 10.30 – 12.30
Wednesday 6 November
Course code: 19TON397 Course fee: £17.50

Marking 80 years since the start of WWII in September 1939, this lecture sets out Germany’s predicament from political, media, military and religious perspectives. Why did Germany fail to thwart Hitler?

We will consider Hitler’s dictatorship: why no group, opposition parties nor The Church were likely to try or be able to assassinate him, and why the only plausible assassins were elements of the army in the face of defeat in the war.

Why were politicians unable to embark on resistance? We look at Hitler’s immense power, and how the Gestapo and the SS dealt ruthlessly with dissent. There was no elected parliament, and the media were controlled by the government. Former political opponents were subdued – either in exile or in concentration camps. In any event the two main left-wing parties from the Weimar Republic were scarcely on speaking terms.

Could the Christian churches have done more to provide effective resistance? The lecture will discuss how Catholics were beholden to Rome, where Pius XII, held sway from 1939, and Protestants were divided between an official “Reich Church” and an independent “Confessional” entity, wrestling with the issue of violence.

Only the army had access to the Fuhrer and the means to kill him. Officers, particularly members of the Waffen SS, would stay loyal. Commanders of other units would also feel bound by their oath, unless convinced that Germany would lose the war.

By mid-1944 Hitler’s conspirators felt ready, and Colonel von Stauffenberg planted his bomb at the Wolfschanz, Hitler’s Eastern Front HQ. The attempt failed and retribution followed. Why then did the plot fail?

Suggested reading

Michael Burleigh, The Third Reich, a New History (Pan Macmillan 2000).

David Evans and Jane Jenkins, Years of Weimar and the Third Reich (Hodder and Stoughton 1999).

Richard J. Evans, The Third Reich at War (Penguin 2008).

Ian Kershaw, The Nazi Dictatorship, Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation (Arnold 2000).

Ian Kershaw, Luck of the Devil, the Story of Operation Valkyrie (Penguin 2009).
Additional information
This course is suitable for all: some prior knowledge would be useful but is not essential. The course allows you to spend time exploring a subject for interest, among like-minded people, without formal assessment. There will be discussion opportunities during the course.

Intended learning outcomes
(a) An understanding of those groups who could – under different circumstances – have presented the Nazis with strong opposition. And why they could not during 1933-45.
(b) An understanding of potential differences within the armed forces over resisting Hitler.
(c) An understanding of the Bomb Plot of 1944, what went wrong and what the dire consequences were.

About the tutor
Edward Towne graduated in European Studies from the University of East Anglia, and later achieved a PGCE from Cambridge, an MA in Early Modern English History from the University of London, and MSt in Twentieth Century British History from the University of Oxford. His professional career was spent teaching History in state and independent Secondary Schools, finally as Head of the History Department. Currently, Edward lectures independently to adults in a variety of organisations, and acts as a reviewer and tour leader on historical topics.
Short Course Programme
General information, terms & conditions

How to book a place
These courses are usually very popular so you are advised to apply as soon as possible. Places cannot be held without payment of the course fee.

- Online Booking is preferred. Please visit www.kent.ac.uk/tonbridge
- By post to us at the address below, using the application form in the programme booklet. Please note that you will not receive an acknowledgment of your paper application; your payment will usually be processed when the course becomes financially viable, otherwise we will notify you of cancellation approximately seven days prior to the course. A paper application affirms acceptance of our terms & conditions.

Course cancellation
As these short courses are self-financing, each course can only proceed if there are sufficient enrolments. Therefore, if a course is cancelled due to insufficient enrolments we aim to notify applicants approximately one week before the course start date; if there is no suitable alternative course, we will refund the appropriate course fee in full. The University of Kent reserves the right to cancel a course for this or any other reason in which case the relevant course fee will be refunded in full. We advise that you do not buy books or other course materials until that particular course is confirmed as taking place: please contact us if you are unsure.

If you find it necessary to cancel your place on a course, please let us know as soon as possible. Refund requests, including the reason, should be made by email or in writing to us at the address below. We reserve the right to retain all or part of the course fee if you request a refund after 14 days of your online booking being made or paper application being received. Discretionary, partial refunds may be made, after the deduction of an administrative handling fee as follows:

- a course fee of up to and including £42 will incur an administrative handling fee of £10.00
- a course fee of £43 and over will incur an administrative handling fee of £12.50.

The University reserves the right to:
   a) exclude any student if the student’s presence is making it difficult for the class to function properly
   b) cancel or amend the length of any course if the circumstances so warrant.

Neither the University of Kent, nor its staff, can be held responsible for any damage, loss or injury, however sustained, suffered by participants attending courses. Insurance is the student’s responsibility.

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- Parking. There is plenty of public pay and display car parking locally, but please note that only selected car parks permit parking in excess of four hours; detailed information is available from www.tmbc.gov.uk. No parking is available here on site.
- Refreshments are not provided; food and drink can be purchased from any of the nearby café outlets - we are closely situated to the High Street and town centre. A hot drink vending machine is usually available on the ground floor of this building.

Mailing List and data protection
Those attending our courses are automatically added to our database and kept informed about new courses. This information is not released to outside organisations. Please write to us if you do not wish your details to be kept on our database.

Please contact us if you have any queries or would like to register your email address to receive our course information updates. We look forward to welcoming you here soon.

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