

0. SUICIDAL RESISTANCE - Story Preface

1. SUICIDAL RESISTANCE

2. UNLIKELY CHOICE

3. A BUDDING INTELLECTUAL

4. HITLER'S 'FINAL SOLUTION'

5. STALKING A MADMAN

6. ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF HITLER

7. HITLER'S HORRORS WORSEN

8. A MARTYR'S DEATH

9. FINAL MONSTROUS ACTS

10. BONHOEFFER'S LEGACY

11. POLITICALLY INCORRECT HEROES

At Flossenbug, a Nazi concentration camp, everyone knew the words a soldier spoke to a condemned prisoner:

Make ready and come with us.

On Sunday, April 8, 1945, a Nazi soldier directed those words to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor who resisted Hitler and the Nazi regime. He had just concluded a worship service.

Bonhoeffer spent the last months of his life at this place of torment. While at Flossenbug, he tried to be a pastor to anguished souls. According to Payne Best, an English prisoner who survived, "His soul really shone in the dark desperation of our prison. He was one of the very few men I have ever met to whom God was real and ever close to him." (Scroll down 60% to the English translation.)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, like Martin Luther King, was murdered at age 39. Both men of God were killed during the month of April: King, the victim of an assassin whose rifle he did not see; Bonhoeffer, the victim of an executioner whose rope he did not fear.

Like King, a preacher whose words indicted a system of racial prejudice, Bonhoeffer was a preacher whose actions defied a system of racial murder. Cautioned that he could be killed for his words, King would not be silent. Warned that he could be executed for his actions, Bonhoeffer would not be passive.

Both men left a legacy of profound accomplishments. (The link takes you to a video of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Move the cursor forward - to 12:15 - to watch the most famous part.) Most people remember King and what he did for civil rights. Many people do not remember Bonhoeffer and what he did for human rights.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SUICIDAL-RESISTANCE-Dietrich-Bonhoeffer>

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Media Stream



Nazi Concentration Camps - 1939 Map

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Dietrich Bonhoeffer Photograph

Bonhoeffer photo, online courtesy Bonhoeffer Haus-Stettin.

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