



0. ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF HITLER - Story Preface

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The assassination plot against Adolf Hitler (on July 20, 1944) did not result in the Nazi leader escaping without any negative impact. As we see in this image, from the German Federal Archives, his trousers were in tatters following the bomb blast.

The [Bundesarchiv](#) provides this description (translated into English): "Hitler assassination on July 20, 1944, Fiihrer Headquarters "Wolfsschanze" ("Wolf's Lair") near Rastenburg, East Prussia, Hitler's trousers after the assassination attempt." The photo, by an unnamed photographer, also depicts one of Hitler's attendants. Credit: Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1972-025-64 / CC-BY-SA 3.0

Taken to Tegel Prison, [Bonhoeffer](#) began what would ultimately be the most prolific part of his life. Already a respected author, [Cost of Discipleship](#) became an apt title for his new life as a prisoner of the Third Reich. The central theme of that 1939 book - true Christians must do all they can to follow Christ - must have resonated through Bonhoeffer as he lived [his life in Cell 92](#).

By July 1944, many high-ranking government officials had long been convinced Hitler and his cohorts were leading Germany down a path of ultimate destruction. Even though [economic conditions](#) in Germany had drastically improved under Hitler's regime, [his opponents](#) could see the future with Hitler. It was a terrible vision.

Germans were upset with the way the victors of World War I had dealt with their country at the end of that war. The Nazis had capitalized on this smoldering resentment. The [Treaty of Versailles](#) (ending WWI) had required Germany to [give up](#) some of its territories. Germans wanted [that land](#) back.

Hitler saw an opportunity. By playing into the fears of the German people, Hitler had used his considerable oratory [skills](#) to convince many people that he and his party were the [best thing](#) for the country. But some of the military commanders who originally thought Hitler could help Germany realized he had to go. The only way to get rid of him - in the minds of many high-ranking people - was to assassinate him.

Members of Bonhoeffer's resistance group and German officers with access to [Hitler](#) - like Colonel Claus [von Stauffenberg](#) - took part in the [plot](#) (code-named "[Operation Valkyrie](#)") to assassinate the Fuhrer. The plan had been years in the making.

The plot came to fruition while Bonhoeffer was already in prison for [smuggling Jews](#) out of the country. On [July 20, 1944](#), Colonel [von Stauffenberg](#) left a briefcase bomb in Hitler's heavily fortified planning room at the now-ruined [Wolf's Lair](#) (then in East Prussia, [now Poland](#)). The bomb [exploded](#) but Hitler, [shaken](#), survived the [attempt](#).

Had Hitler, and his staff, been in their normal meeting place (a bunker) instead of a room with windows (where pressure from the explosion was not confined), the blast would have killed everyone. The [bunkers](#) at Wolf's Lair [today](#) are not as they were when the attempted assassination took place. When he left the Eastern Front, Hitler believed his former headquarters could be used by the approaching Soviet Army, so he ordered them [destroyed](#).

The Nazis [shot](#) Von Stauffenberg the same evening in Berlin. Two days after the [assassination attempt](#), the Nazi Party's newspaper demanded that German people make greater sacrifices and give absolute obedience to the party and to government leaders. Officials in charge of [trials](#), orchestrated to condemn the plot's leaders, had one object in mind: demonstrate their own loyalty to Hitler. Rules required for a just trial were completely ignored.

The Nazis implicated thousands of people in the assassination plot, including Bonhoeffer and three members of his immediate family (his brother Klaus and two brothers-in-law). Incriminating documents, hidden by his sister's husband Hans von Dohnanyi, had been found by the Gestapo. Although he did not yet realize the secret papers were in the hands of his enemies, Bonhoeffer was a condemned man.

Transferred to the Berlin Gestapo Prison in February 1945, Bonhoeffer knew he would be executed. His correspondence from prison - smuggled out and published as *Letters and Papers From Prison* - reflect the knowledge of his impending death. Few martyrs have so vividly painted a picture of events leading to their final act of courage.

But prison was not the end for Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The Gestapo had other, more brutal plans in store for him. He was transferred to Buchenwald, the infamous concentration camp.

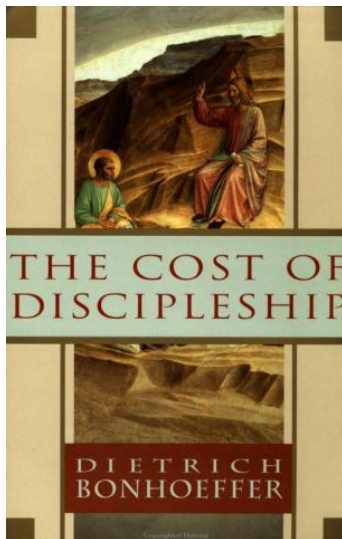
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/ATTEMPTED-ASSASSINATION-OF-HITLER-Dietrich-Bonhoeffer>

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Media Stream

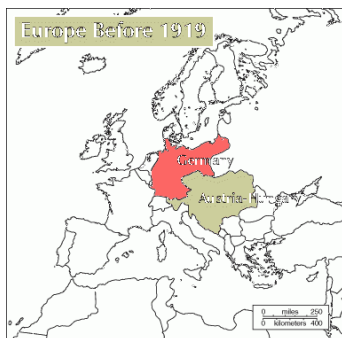


The Cost of Discipleship - by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Image online, courtesy amazon.com website.

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Europe in 1919 - Germany to Forfeit Territory

Image online, courtesy the [interwarperiods](http://interwarperiods.com) blog site.

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Europe After 1919 - Map

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Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg

Image online, courtesy the Chemistry Daily website.

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Wolf's Lair

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Map Depicting the Location of Wolf's Lair

Image online, courtesy mholoway blog site.

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Bunkers at Wolf's Lair

Image provided here by Przemysław 'Blueshade' Idzkiewicz. Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY-SA 3.0.

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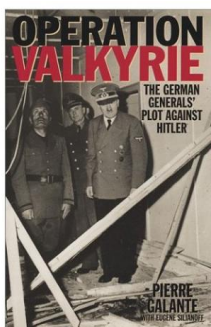


Photo of Wolf's Lair After the Explosion

Image online, courtesy the valkyrie-plot.com website.

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Operation Valkyrie - by Pierre Galante

Image online, courtesy amazon.com website.

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Colonel von Stauffenberg

Image online, courtesy the [German Resistance Memorial Center](#).

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Hitler at Wolf's Lair - Viewing the Damage

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Hans von Dohnanyi

Image online, courtesy the [American Hungarian Federation](#) website.

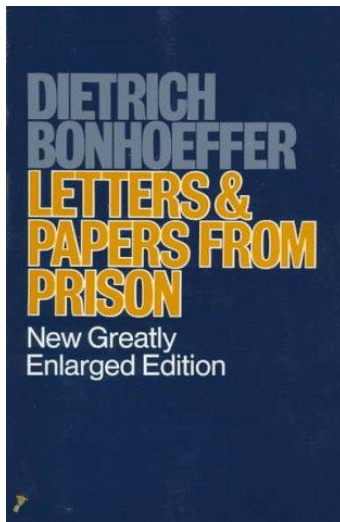
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Klaus Bonhoeffer

Image online, courtesy the [Jewish Virtual Library](#) website.

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Letters and Papers From Prison - by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Image online, courtesy amazon.com website.

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Photo: Hitler and von Stauffenberg

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Photo: Surveying the Assassination Attempt

Image online, courtesy the Spiegel Online website.

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Photo: Wolf's Lair - Today

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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The Bunkers at Wolf's Lair

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