The Line of Resistance during World War II

One of the reasons why World War II ended in victory over Fascism is the Resistance Line movement.

In this presentation I want to talk about the most significant members of the Resistance from different countries.

1. Dmitriy Nikolayevich Medvedev (22 August 1898 - 14 December 1954).

Medvedev commanded the special-purpose partisan detachment "Pobediteley", which operated in central and western Ukraine.

In June 1942, under Medvedev's leadership, a special reconnaissance group was formed. It was later used as the basis for a family camp, in which 160 Jewish women, children, and elderly people were rescued from the ghetto.

Medvedev's detachment carried out over 120 major operations, killed 11 generals and senior government officials, some 2,000 German soldiers, and some 6,000 police and Ukrainian nationalists. The unit blew up 81 trains of manpower and equipment. The detachment created 10 new partisan units during its period of activity.

Medvedev's detachment participated in the liberation of Ukraine and acted in the rear of the Red Army.

Dmitry Medvedev was twice wounded in fights and once contused. He was treated in Moscow, and after his recovery was appointed deputy chief of the 4th Directorate of the NKVD.

1. Fyodor Illarionovich Pavlovsky (27 November 1908 - 6 April 1989).

From January 1942, Pavlovski commanded a partisan unit. Under his leadership, a large German garrison was defeated on January 14, 1942, and a few days later the first BSSR district centre was liberated from the Nazi occupation forever. Later, Pavlovski's partisans de-occupied the territories of four districts of the BSSR.

1. Oleg Vasilievich Koshevoy (June 8, 1926 - February 9, 1943).

In November 1942, at the age of 16, Oleg Koshevoy became a member of the Soviet underground anti-fascist Komsomol youth organization "Young Guard".

Oleg Koshevoy was involved in distributing leaflets, crushing enemy vehicles, collecting weapons, burning warehouses of bread destined for delivery to Hitler's Germany. He also carried out liaison with underground groups in the vicinity of Krasnodon and on behalf of the headquarters gave them combat assignments.

In January 1943, the organisation was discovered by the German security service, and mass arrests began at the same time. Oleg and some members of the movement managed to escape from Krasnodon. They tried to cross the front line, but without success.

On January 12, 1943, he was detained by German police at a railway station - during a formal search at the checkpoint he was found to have a pistol, clean forms of an underground member and a Komsomol card sewn into his clothes. Oleg was taken first to the police and then at the end of January 1943, after enduring interrogations and brutal torture with red-hot iron, Oleg was shot with other arrested Young Guard members.

1. Manolis Glezos (9 September 1922 - 30 March 2020).

Glezos had been involved in the resistance movement against the Italian occupation since 1939. His age (17) prevented him from serving in the Greek army. Under the Italian-German occupation he joined the underground struggle, while continuing to work for the Greek Red Cross Mission.

On the night of May 31st 1941, together with his comrade Apostolos Santas, he climbed the Acropolis and removed the Nazi flag with the swastika, which was placed on it under heavy guard. This was the first act of resistance against the Nazi occupiers in Greece, raising many Greeks to fight. For this feat Charles de Gaulle called Glezos "the first partisan of World War II".

The Nazis sentenced Glezos and Santas to death in absentia. In March 1942, Glezos was arrested by the German guard and tortured in prison, causing him to fall ill with tuberculosis. The Nazis released him from prison, but in April, 1943 he was detained by the Italian occupation forces. After 3 months in prison Glezos was released. In February, 1944 he was arrested again, this time by Greek collaborators. In September he managed to escape.

He spent a total of 16 years in prison for his convictions; he was sentenced to death four times, but died on March 20, 2020.

1. Hans Fritz Scholl (22 September 1918 - 22 February 1943) and Sofia Magdalena Scholl (9 May 1921 - 22 February 1943).

Hans and Sophia were both active in the resistance to the Nazi regime in Germany.

Hans became involved with a banned youth group, for which he was imprisoned for a time.

On reaching conscription age he took part as a doctor in the French campaign in the summer of 1940, and in 1942 on the eastern front.

Under the influence of her father, her friends and some of her teachers, Sophie became disillusioned with Nazism, as did her brothers and sisters.

In May 1942 Sophie enrolled at the University of Munich to study philosophy and biology. Hans had by then already returned from the front and was studying at the medical faculty. He introduced Sophie to his friends, who formed a close-knit group with shared interests.

The group wrote leaflets calling for people to join the fight against the Nazi regime. The aim of the action was to counteract the state propaganda.

On 3, 8, and 15 February 1943, the members of the group sprayed the slogans "Down with Hitler" and "Freedom" on the walls of Munich University and other buildings in Munich.

In February 1943, student protests began to rise at the University of Munich. The members of the "White Rose" decided to take part in the student agitation. On 18 February 1943 (after the Battle of Stalingrad), they printed 1,300 leaflets which called for an uprising. Sophie Scholl took them to the university and left them in the foyer. She threw the few remaining flyers over the balcony to the students below. The guard saw this and called the Gestapo.

Hans and Sophie were arrested and tried at an emergency meeting of the People's Court. They were found guilty and executed by guillotine on 22 February 1943. Hans' last words before the execution were, "Long live liberty!".

I would like to end with the words of Sophia Scholl: "The sun is still shining".After all, even on the darkest day, people will find a way to reach it if they stand together.