The History of the Twentieth Century
Episode 402
"The Resistance I"
Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

It would be insane and criminal, in the event of Allied action on the continent, not to make use of troops prepared for the greatest sacrifices, scattered and unorganized today, but tomorrow capable of making up a united army of parachute troops already in place, familiar with the terrain, and having already selected their enemy and determined their objective.

Jean Moulin.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century.*

[music: Opening War Theme]

Episode 402. The Resistance I.

Before the German invasion of the Soviet Union began in June 1941, the German policy toward the European nations they occupied was relatively gentle. The main exceptions were the occupied Czech lands and especially Poland. Hitler positively loathed Slavic peoples such as Poles and Czechs, and his long-term goal was the utter eradication of both nations and both peoples.

Then came Operation Barbarossa. I've already described to you the abuse and killings of millions of Soviet POWs and the barbaric Hunger Plan intended to starve the Slavic populations of the western USSR into extinction. The Nazis regarded Slavs—and Roma, and Jews—as little more than animals and forced them into living in environments of deprivation, disease, starvation, and degradation. Then, having reduced them to an animal-like existence, would call attention to their humiliating state as proof of their racial inferiority; a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy.

Ironically, despite Hitler's loathing of Slavs, about a million Slavs from occupied Eastern Europe served in the Wehrmacht and the Waffen-SS military units. Most of them were unarmed and served in support roles, but some of them served, unofficially, as front-line soldiers. As I've noted before, many of these Slavic soldiers were dubbed "Cossacks" in order to spare the Nazis

embarrassment over the use of Slavs to fight for the Reich. Soviet POWs also served as guards at the German concentration and extermination camps; ethnic Ukrainians in particular gained a reputation for cruelty toward prisoners.

And then there was the case of Red Army general Andrey Andreyevich Vlasov, who was taken prisoner during the fight to relieve the siege of Leningrad. Once in German hands, Vlasov agreed to lead what was dubbed the Russian Liberation Army, nominally an independent, Russian-controlled military dedicated essentially to reversing the October Revolution and restoring the former Republic. Initially, the Russian Liberation Army was nothing more than a German propaganda tool, used to encourage Red Army soldiers to defect, although by 1944, with German manpower shortages growing ever more acute, real Russian units were organized from Soviet POWs and took up arms, more than 100,000 in all, though their degree of enthusiasm for their new roles was underwhelming.

When the news of General Vlasov's defection reached the Kremlin, Foreign Minister Molotov exclaimed, in a reference to the purges of the 1930s, "How did we miss him…?"

Back in episode 347, I described to you the Nazis' long-range plan to depopulate Slavic lands all the way to the Urals and replace them with German colonists. These plans never came anywhere near fruition. They were too ambitious and they suffered from Hitler's chaotic leadership style, which relied on giving his subordinates overlapping areas of authority. If they fought among themselves, you see, they would be unlikely to band together against him.

So it was that Alfred Rosenberg, the high-ranking Nazi appointed minister for the occupied eastern territories, devised plans for dividing the occupied Soviet Union into multiple semi-autonomous lands, essentially German colonial states, which would be encouraged to participate in the war against the Bolsheviks. But these plans ran up against the brutal, murderous occupation policies of the SS, led by Heinrich Himmler, who was eager to get to work on the mass murder of Slavs to cleanse the East for German occupation, and those of Hermann Göring, who was in charge of organizing the German war economy. Göring was indifferent to the Slavs, but keen on stripping their lands of foodstuffs and resources to supply the Wehrmacht.

The infamous Hunger Plan for mass starvation of the Soviet peoples never got put into motion. There was plenty of starvation in the East, but not the organized kind envisioned by the Hunger Plan. Occupied cities were not closed off and left to starve because the Wehrmacht needed their citizens' labor.

Plans to commandeer the agricultural bounty of Ukraine also failed. Soviet scorched-earth withdrawals left the fields burned, agricultural equipment destroyed or spirited away, and farm communities depopulated. As we've seen, the German Army supplied itself in the occupied East by indiscriminately seizing whatever grain, fodder, and livestock they could get their hands on for immediate consumption, leaving nothing for next year's production.

Around a million Soviet citizens aided the Germans in some capacity during the war, although you must keep in mind that many of them were starving and suffering and had little choice. The vast majority of Soviet citizens, as you would expect, hated the Germans. Soviet partisan units began forming behind German lines in 1941. These first partisans were mostly Red Army soldiers who had been surrounded in one of those huge pockets in which the Germans trapped more than a million Soviet soldiers that year, but these soldiers hid in forests or in civilian homes and evaded the roundups of prisoners.

Other Soviet partisans were civilians living in German-occupied territory who took up the fight. Many of these were members of the Communist Party or Komsomol, the Communist Youth League, and for them the struggle was very much an ideological one. They were fighting to protect the Communist state from those who sought its destruction.

By 1942, the Red Army was dropping fighters and supplies by parachute to assist the partisans, who were becoming organized and directed by Moscow. By 1943, more than a hundred thousand partisans were operating in huge swaths of territory behind German lines. They had some of their greatest successes in providing intelligence and sabotaging the rail lines that were the Wehrmacht's principal means of transporting supplies to the Eastern Front. A disabled rail line meant rerouting supplies over other rail lines that were already strained, or relying on truck transport when the Germans were chronically short on trucks.

The Germans had to devote some 12 divisions to anti-partisan actions, about 10% of their forces inside Soviet borders, more German soldiers than were fighting the British in North Africa. When the Red Army went on the offensive, beginning with the Battle of Kursk in the summer of 1943, partisans assisted by coordinating their sabotage actions with Soviet offensives and by clearing areas in the German rear for advancing Red Army regulars.

And as you might expect, after the German reversals at Stalingrad and Kursk and Kharkov, increasing numbers of civilians in occupied lands assisted the partisan fighters. Even among the slave laborers the Germans recruited in the East were a few that escaped from their confinement and operated as partisans under Soviet leadership as far west as France.

Relations between Soviet partisans and the Polish Home Army were fraught. Early in the war, Soviet partisans steered clear of territories in which the Home Army operated, even those the Soviet Union claimed and occupied in 1939. After the revelation of the Katyn Massacre however, came the break in relations between Moscow and the Polish government in exile and the creation of an alternative Communist, pro-Soviet Polish government. Afterwards, Polish and Soviet partisans no longer cooperated and sometimes clashed.

Speaking of the Polish resistance, Poland was of course the first country to develop an armed resistance movement opposed to German occupation all the way back in 1939. Winston Churchill and other political leaders in Britain were much inspired by the Poles, and this led to the creation in July 1940 of what was vaguely named the Special Operations Executive, or SOE,

through which Britain would provide aid and assistance to resistance groups in occupied Europe. I've alluded to the SOE's operations in Europe in previous episodes, notably the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, episode 364, although I hadn't yet introduced the SOE by name. Now you know.

The first head of the SOE was Labor MP Hugh Dalton, who held the post of minister of economic warfare in the Churchill government. The SOE looked to the examples of the Polish resistance and the Irish Republican Army during the struggle for Irish independence as models for what they hoped to inspire in occupied Europe. On the day Dalton received his appointment, Churchill told him, "And now, go and set Europe ablaze."

In the case of the Polish and Czech resistance movements, both of them answered to their respective governments in exile, so SOE simply worked in cooperation with those governments, which were based in London. The Polish Home Army provided valuable intelligence to the British. As you already know, they sent the first reports of mass murders of Jewish people in Polish territory. They also provided the first information about German experiments with the V-1 and V-2 rockets in 1943. In spring of 1944, while the Germans were conducting test launches of V-2s in Poland, the Polish resistance were able to seize a relatively undamaged rocket that had landed in a swamp before the Germans had a chance to recover it. The rocket was hidden, then dismantled and the pieces carried away. In July, the RAF sent a Dakota C-47 transport plane from southern Italy at night. The plane landed at an abandoned airfield in Poland, where the Home Army loaded the pieces aboard. They were then carried to England for study.

The first occupied nation to rise up in armed resistance to the occupation was Yugoslavia. I told you the story of how Germany invaded and occupied that country in episode 343. The conquest of Yugoslavia was so quick and easy that it left the Germans complacent. But on July 4, 1941, less than three months after Yugoslavia surrendered and just two weeks after the Germans began their invasion of the Soviet Union, a revolt began in Serbia, led by a Communist leader who was himself half-Croat and half-Slovene. His name was Josip Broz, but first the Germans and then the world would know him by the *nom de guerre* of Tito.

This uprising caught the Germans off guard. Yes, the conquest of Yugoslavia had been quick and easy, but the Germans did not consider how many Yugoslav soldiers simply stashed their weapons after the surrender and bided their time, waiting for an opportunity to strike back.

The German Army had only three divisions stationed in Yugoslavia, second-string units armed with older weapons. Wehrmacht commander in chief Wilhelm Keitel angrily demanded that for every German soldier killed, one hundred Yugoslav civilians be executed in reprisal. German commanders on the scene decided the easiest route would be to execute Jews, Roma, and other people deemed undesirables whom the Germans had already rounded up. In October, 2,100 people were killed in retribution for Communist partisan attacks that had killed 21 German soldiers.

There was also a nationalist, royalist resistance in Yugoslavia, known as the Četniks. The origin of the name is unclear. They were led by a former Yugoslav Army colonel named Draža Mihailović, and unlike the multi-ethnic Communist partisans, the Četniks were almost exclusively Serb. Mihailović was loyal to King Peter and the Yugoslav government in exile, and the government repaid his loyalty in December 1941 by promoting him to brigadier general and naming him commander in chief of the Yugoslav Home Army.

What you see here is a pattern repeated in many of the occupied countries in Europe and in East Asia: two distinct resistance groups, one nationalist (and often royalist), the other Communist. The reasons why there were so many Communists in the various resistance movements are simple to understand: the occupation forces of Germany, Italy, or Japan were quick to round up, imprison, and often execute local Communist Party members when they could identify them, so it was either submit to what might well be your own execution, or join the resistance. Naturally, there was also an ideological component to Communist resistance, once Germany invaded the Soviet Union, and Communist parties, even in peacetime, had already become accustomed to meeting in secret and operating under a strict discipline, practices that proved helpful in the resistance.

The other sort of resistance groups, the nationalist kind, tended to lean right in their political orientation and be at best suspicious of the Communist resistance fighters, and often openly hostile, even to the point of combat between the two groups. Nationalist resistance leaders, like Mihailović in Yugoslavia, believed the Communists' goal was not merely to liberate their country from Axis occupation, but to install a pro-Soviet Communist government after the occupiers were forced out. And they were quite right about that.

In the case of Yugoslavia, the Communist fighters, who were known simply as the Partisans, fought bravely and tenaciously against the occupation, while the Četniks, not so much. In the early days of the occupation, the Četniks and the Partisans sometimes engaged in joint actions against the Germans, but those 100-for-1 German reprisals persuaded Mihailović that direct attacks against German occupation forces were unwise.

As a result, the Četniks gradually gained a reputation as a resistance force that was strangely resistant to resisting. They did do some work helpful to the Allies in other ways, such as intelligence gathering and assisting escaped POWs, but they were also in the habit of attacking—and sometimes massacring—Communist Partisans, as well as ethnic Croat and Bosniak civilians, sometimes in collaboration with Axis occupation forces. Pretty ugly stuff.

In fairness to Mihailović, not all of this can be laid at his feet. Unlike the highly loyal and tightly organized Communists, the Četniks were more a loose affiliation of many local resistance groups that chose to call themselves Četniks, but weren't necessarily taking orders from the general.

Whatever the sins of the Četniks, and they were many, they pale in comparison to the militias of the Ustaše, the fascist party that governed the Axis puppet state of Croatia. I already told you

how the government of Ante Pavelić was so brutal that even the German Nazis thought they were going too far. Ustaše militia fighters clashed with the Četniks and the Partisans as well as committing genocidal slaughter of any civilians in Croatia who were not Croat. The Ustaše were responsible for the killings of some 25,000 Roma, virtually the entire Roma population of Croatia, and 32,000 Jews, about three-quarters of the Jewish population. Most of those who survived the killings did so by joining Tito's Partisans. The Ustaše also killed hundreds of thousands of ethnic Serbs living in Croatia and drove hundreds of thousands of others out of the country.

In summary, violence between ethnic groups in Yugoslavia raged throughout the period of the country's occupation, which redounded to the advantage of Tito and his Partisans. As Communists, the Partisans rejected ethnic discrimination. Anyone of any ethnic group or any gender was welcome to join, and thousands of women joined the Partisans. The Partisans also restricted themselves to fighting the Germans and never collaborated with them.

The British SOE was initially inclined to support the Četniks, as they were at least nominally under the command of the Yugoslav government in exile in London, but gradually came to the realization that the Communist Partisans were the only resistance fighters in Yugoslavia more focused on fighting the Germans than attacking each other.

Attempts by the SOE to persuade the various resistance groups in Yugoslavia to cooperate led to nothing, while Enigma intercepts revealed that the Germans themselves saw the Partisans as their most serious enemy. By late 1943, the Partisans counted nearly a quarter of a million fighters in their ranks, who were proving to be some of the most skilled soldiers of the war. The Allies were persuaded that the Partisans were their staunchest supporters in Yugoslavia. SOE parachuted in a liaison officer to work with Tito, and from then on, the Partisans received most of the Allied aid sent to Yugoslavia.

Developments in Albania, to the south, were similar. Italy had invaded and occupied Albania before the war began in Europe, so there was no Albanian government in exile recognized by the Allies. Inside Albania, there were resistance fighters loyal to the deposed King Zog, and there were resistance fighters who favored the establishment of an Albanian republic, but the rural, agrarian state hadn't developed a Communist Party worthy of the name by 1939. In 1941, a group of some 130 Albanians met to form an Albanian Communist Party under the leadership of the 33-year-old Enver Hoxha. Like their Yugoslav comrades, the Albanian Communists soon distinguished themselves as the resistance movement most dedicated to the fight against the Axis and became the principal recipients of Allied assistance.

[music: "La Marseillaise."]

When you think of anti-Nazi resistance in Europe, at least we English speakers most often think first of the French resistance. When France accepted an armistice with Germany, the end of the fighting came with a sense of relief, but also with powerful feelings of shock and shame. In

Paris, the Nazi swastika flag flew from the top of the Eiffel Tower and both the Tower and the Palais Bourbon, which had housed the National Assembly and was now the seat of the German military administration in Paris, bore banners that read Deutschland Siegt an Allen Fronten, that is, Germany is victorious on all fronts. Later, large letter Vs were added to both structures, part of a German attempt to co-opt the Allied "V for Victory" campaign for themselves.

French civilians did their best to carry on with their lives, though that wasn't easy for the loved ones of the 1.5 million French POWs still being held in Germany. Hitler and his government went out of their way to make the French occupation relatively gentle, for the simple reason that it would have been costly in manpower for the Wehrmacht to occupy and rule France on its own. The German occupation depended on French cooperation.

But as you know, the Nazi government was also determined to spare German civilians the hardships that led to the Revolution of 1918, and that meant raiding French agricultural production. France has the most productive farm economy in Europe, but that bounty was now being shipped to Germany and the French found themselves limited to measly rations of staple foodstuffs such as bread, cheese, wine, butter, and eggs, items which had once been plentiful. The average height of French children who grew up during the occupation was nine centimeters less than the pre-war average.

The combination of these deprivations imposed on the French by the Germans and the regular radio broadcasts from Charles de Gaulle declaring that the struggle against the occupiers was not over and exhorting the French to join the fight led to the formation of resistance groups, as early as the end of 1940. At this point they were not yet taking up arms, but rather circulating news the Nazis didn't want the French to hear by word of mouth and by publishing underground newsletters.

A galvanizing moment came in November 1940, when a tussle broke out between German soldiers and French pedestrians on a Paris street corner. Who started it and other such details are not clear, but one young Frenchman was arrested. He was a 28-year-old engineer named Jacques Bonsergent. He does not seem to have been an instigator; in fact, it seems likely he was no more than an innocent bystander, but he was arrested and tried before a German military court, which sentenced him to death for the crime of insulting the German Army.

The German military authorities made an example of him. They put up posters across Paris, warning that any French civilian who opposed the occupation would meet the same fate as the late Bonsergent. Parisians vandalized or tore down most of the posters. When the Germans declared that vandalizing the posters would be punished with execution, Parisians instead pinned flowers and French tricolors to the posters.

This was the first execution of a French civilian during the occupation, and the victim had been no more than an innocent bystander to a minor dispute. It drove home to the French public that

the German occupation was at best an iron fist in a velvet glove, and the velvet glove was beginning to come off.

Long-time listeners know that we've been talking about how contentious French politics had been during the Third Republic. Well, French politics during the occupation got even more complex. There was the familiar divide between the Catholic, monarchist right and the anti-clerical, Republican left, but even within those two camps there were further divisions. Some on the French right were sympathetic to Nazi views, especially the Nazis' anti-Communism, and hoped that after the Germans won the war, France could partner with Germany and regain its role as a major European power. Others on the right of a more nationalist persuasion seethed at the occupation and longed to kick the Germans back across the Rhine.

On the French left, there were anti-fascists who abhorred the Nazis and everything they stood for, but there were also the French Communists who, following the lead of Comintern, supported Germany as a Soviet partner and deplored the warmongering British capitalists as the real enemy of France and of all peace-loving peoples.

In 1941, the V for victory campaign began and the French embraced it. Crowds sang "La Marseillaise" in public, calling out the line "To arms, citizens!" especially loudly.

You won't be surprised to learn that their pro-German, anti-British position cost the Communists much of their support in France, but that began to change after Operation Barbarossa. Communist parties everywhere did an abrupt about-face, again under direction from Comintern, which didn't do their credibility much good with the general public, but at least now they were on the right side.

The French Communist Party began a campaign of assassinations of high-ranking German military officers. The German military responded by executing French people in its custody in retribution. At first it was three French for every German murdered, then ten, then a hundred.

These retributive killings were counterproductive, because in France as elsewhere in occupied Europe, they served mostly to alienate the civilian population. The Communists continued their assassination campaign despite the brutal German response, a controversial decision. Even General de Gaulle, broadcasting from Britain, called on the Communists to stop. His plea was ignored.

And that brings us to Jean Moulin, a French civil servant who was, at the age of 40, the youngest prefect in all France when the war began. After the armistice, the Vichy government removed Moulin from his position because of his left-leaning political views. He joined the Free France resistance movement, which was one of the many non-Communist resistance movements; this one recognized Charles de Gaulle and his Free French as the legitimate government of France.

In September 1941, Moulin escaped across the border into Spain, and from there to Portugal and then to London, where he met with the SOE and with de Gaulle to report on the state of the resistance in France. Moulin had contacts with a number of the resistance groups. On January 1, 1942, the SOE parachuted him back into southern France with letters from de Gaulle calling on the various resistance groups to band together, under the direction of the Free French government.

The Communist groups were suspicious of de Gaulle and unwilling to accept his leadership, but over the following three months, Moulin successfully brought several non-Communist resistance groups together. They were told not to conduct open warfare against the German occupation force, but rather to assist the Allies by gathering intelligence and by sabotage.

Moulin helped the French resistance organize into small groups, or cells. The members of each cell knew only each other; they received orders from superiors with whom they did not have personal contact. This was done for security reasons, as the German military and Gestapo were having all too many successes in infiltrating the resistance groups and arresting their members. Anyone believed suspicious was simply arrested and interrogated. The German interrogators employed torture; they also threatened the prisoner's families, including threats to put the prisoner's wife or girlfriend or daughter into a German military brothel. Most prisoners broke down and confessed; they were then sent back to their resistance comrades to collect more names and more information.

Many French assisted the Germans in their fight against the resistance by denouncing neighbors and associates as resistance agents. This was often motivated by petty grudges and score-settling; the Gestapo found itself on the receiving end of a flood of anonymous letters. Indeed, Moulin himself was captured by the SD, the SS security office, in Lyon in June 1943, along with eight other resistance leaders with whom he was meeting. He was held prisoner and brutally tortured by an SS officer named Klaus Barbie for about two weeks before he died of the injuries inflicted on him. He did not give the Germans any information about the resistance.

A series of events in late 1942 and early 1943 triggered explosive growth in the French resistance. The first was Operation Torch, the Anglo-American invasion of North Africa, which you already know all about. The defection of the French military to the Allies made it clear that France was still in the fight; the loss of North Africa to the Allies underscored that the tide was turning against the Axis.

Eisenhower's Darlan deal had the unforeseen side effect of driving the Communist resistance into the waiting arms of Charles de Gaulle. The Communists were outraged by the American embrace of the man who, as prime minister in the Vichy government, had overseen the executions of so many of their comrades. De Gaulle was on the outs with the Americans and had opposed the Darlan deal; that was all the Communists needed to know. De Gaulle shrewdly made friendly overtures directly to Stalin and the Soviet government in Moscow as a way of

cementing the support of French Communists and to give himself some leverage in maintaining his movement's independence from the British and Americans.

Operation Torch triggered the movement of German forces into unoccupied France, where the resistance was stronger and better established. Then in January 1943, French prime minister Pierre Laval announced the formation of a paramilitary organization known as *la milice française*, or the "French Militia," to aid the Germans in their fight against the resistance. The Milice was led by committed French fascists. Its soldiers were mostly criminals, thugs, and naïve young men who thought it was cool to go around carrying a rifle when most French civilians were barred from owning firearms. Not that the Germans allowed very many of them to carry rifles, and when they did get rifles, they were British rifles the Germans captured at Dunkirk in 1940.

Most French resistance members were young men, as was true in other occupied countries. Young men are strong and have stamina, and less likely to have families to support. Many of these young Frenchmen came of age during the occupation, when life was bleak and opportunities few.

Also few were opportunities to get a girlfriend or get married. Germany was still holding 1.5 million French POWs, meaning there was a shortage of young men in France, which led to many French women entering into relationships with German soldiers, which was much resented by the French public. The French called it "horizontal collaboration," which has to be like the most French thing ever.

You might have thought with so many young Frenchmen imprisoned in Germany that the available men would be in demand, but young Frenchmen were poor and starving, while German soldiers had money and access to food and other nice things unavailable to the French. The resentment this created among the young Frenchmen is an important reason why the resistance kept growing.

The winter of 1942-43 was the winter of Stalingrad. In 1943, Germany was short on labor. Fortunately for Hitler, his BFF, French prime minister Pierre Laval, helped him out by organizing a labor draft to force French people to work in Germany. All able-bodied French men aged 20-22 were liable to be called up and sent to Germany to do two years of forced labor in support of the German war effort. Over time, the age range was widened until it ultimately became 18-45.

Opposition to the labor draft was ferocious, and many young men simply fled into French countryside to avoid working for the Germans. The French government called them deserters; they adopted the name *maquis*, an obscure Corsican slang word for bandit that was on everyone's lips by the end of 1943.

It is estimated that as many as half the men called up for the labor draft chose the maquis option. Fritz Sauckel, the Nazi Party leader who was in charge of what the German government called "labor deployment" demanded a strong response to these desertions. In Sauckel's view, to refuse the labor draft was a form of sabotage against the German war effort, and anyone guilty of sabotage was subject to summary execution. So Sauckel leaned on Laval and Laval sicced the Milice on the Maquis, and something like a low-grade civil war broke out in the French countryside between the Maquis and the Milice, neither of whom were very well armed.

The Maquis weren't necessarily political, not at first. They just didn't want to do slave labor in the Reich, but when the Milice came after them, it forcefully demonstrated to the Maquis that their enemy wasn't just the labor draft; it was the occupation itself. When the Resistance reached out to the Maquis, they were happy to join up. Even the German ambassador in Vichy remarked that the resistance should put up a statue of Fritz Sauckel inscribed with the words, "To our number one recruiting agent."

By the end of 1943, the various resistance groups had indeed more or less coalesced into a single United Resistance that accepted Charles de Gaulle as their leader, achieving what Moulin had sacrificed his life for. The Resistance was radioing daily intelligence reports to Britain. Its armed branch, called the Secret Army, had more than a quarter million members. They were still poorly armed and in no position to go toe-to-toe with the Wehrmacht, a fact which was amply demonstrated on the occasions when a few of them tried, but they could and did accept advice from de Gaulle and the British on preparing for the day that Allied troops landed in France. Then they would rise up and harry the German Army's supply and communication lines.

I have more to say about the Resistance next week, but we'll have to stop here for today. I thank you for listening and I'd like to thank Brent and Glenn for their kind donations, and thank you to Hannah for becoming a patron of the podcast. Donors and patrons like Brent and Glenn and Hannah help cover the costs of making this show, which in turn keeps the podcast available free for everyone always, so my thanks to them and to all of you who have pitched in and helped out. If you'd like to become a patron or make a donation, you are most welcome; just visit the website, historyofthetwentiethcentury.com and click on the PayPal or Patreon buttons.

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I think I'm ready to go back to the regular schedule now, of four weeks on and one week off, so I hope you'll join me next week, here, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*, as we take a look

at the resistance movements in a few other countries in occupied Europe. That's next week, here, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. Some of you may have recognized the name of Jean Moulin's brutal SS interrogator, Klaus Barbie. They called him "the Butcher of Lyon." After the war, the French government wanted him arrested and tried for war crimes, but he had escaped. The French went ahead and tried him *in abstentia* anyway; in 1947, and he was sentenced to death.

There existed an underground network of Nazis and Nazi sympathizers who helped other Nazis, especially SS officers, escape to the Americas, where they lived in hiding. Speculation has it that this operation was paid for from Swiss bank accounts created by members of the SS and funded with loot from Jewish families and occupied countries. The most famous, or infamous, names spirited away by this network included Adolf Eichmann, Josef Mengele, and Klaus Barbie.

Barbie escaped to Bolivia, where he lived for more than thirty years under the name Klaus Altmann. He assisted the dictators running that country at the time in acquiring arms, and by training SS interrogation and torture techniques to Bolivian paramilitaries.

In the Seventies, French journalists identified Barbie and publicized his whereabouts. In 1983, after the Bolivian military dictatorship fell, Barbie was extradited to France. It soon came out that Barbie had been helped to escape French justice not only by a shadowy network of Nazis, but also by American intelligence agencies. After the war, US intelligence agencies employed Barbie as an intelligence asset, then helped him escape to Bolivia. In August 1983, the US government formally apologized to the French government for its role in protecting Barbie.

Since France had by this time abolished the death penalty, Barbie's previous sentence had to be set aside and he was retried. In 1987, he was sentenced to life in prison. He died in 1991, at the age of 77.

[music: Closing War Theme]