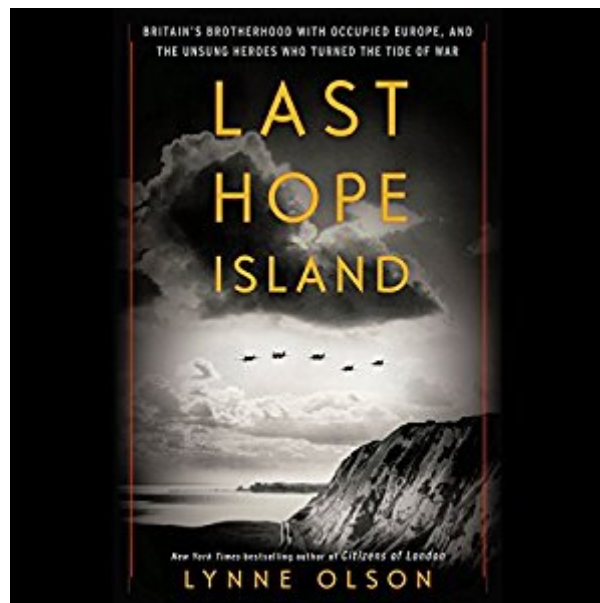




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Last Hope Island: Britain, Occupied Europe, And The Brotherhood That Helped Turn The Tide Of War



Synopsis

A groundbreaking account of how Britain became the base of operations for the exiled leaders of Europe in their desperate struggle to reclaim their continent from Hitler, from the New York Times best-selling author of *Citizens of London* and *Those Angry Days*. When the Nazi blitzkrieg rolled over continental Europe in the early days of World War II, the city of London became a refuge for the governments and armed forces of six occupied nations who escaped there to continue the fight. So, too, did General Charles de Gaulle, the self-appointed representative of free France. As the only European democracy still holding out against Hitler, Britain became known to occupied countries as "Last Hope Island". Getting there, one young emigrant declared, was "like getting to heaven". In this epic, character-driven narrative, acclaimed historian Lynne Olson takes us back to those perilous days when the British and their European guests joined forces to combat the mightiest military force in history. Here we meet the courageous King Haakon of Norway, whose distinctive "H7" monogram became a symbol of his country's resistance to Nazi rule, and his fiery Dutch counterpart, Queen Wilhelmina, whose antifascist radio broadcasts rallied the spirits of her defeated people. Here, too, is the Earl of Suffolk, a swashbuckling British aristocrat whose rescue of two nuclear physicists from France helped make the Manhattan Project possible. Last Hope Island also recounts some of the Europeans' heretofore unsung exploits that helped tilt the balance against the Axis: the crucial efforts of Polish pilots during the Battle of Britain; the vital role played by French and Polish code breakers in cracking the Germans' reputedly indecipherable Enigma code; and the flood of top-secret intelligence about German operations - gathered by spies throughout occupied Europe - that helped ensure the success of the 1944 Allied invasion. A fascinating companion to *Citizens of London*, Olson's best-selling chronicle of the Anglo-American alliance, *Last Hope Island* recalls with vivid humanity that brief moment in time when the peoples of Europe stood together in their effort to roll back the tide of conquest and restore order to a broken continent.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

England was the island of last hope for those countries that were invaded by Germany. It was clear that the Polish airman saved the British from the invading German Air Force, and the Enigma code and Enigma machines were provided to Turing and the boys at Blenheim., but the Polish mathematicians did not receive credit. Fortunately the Polish squadrons did receive credit. FDR and Churchill "gave" Poland to the Russians at Yalta, but never told the Poles until the very very last minute. The monarchs from Denmark, Norway, etc were able to escape and fight the war from England. If it hasn't been for the merchant ships and gold from these countries, it is not clear if England would have survived. MI6, the James Bond secret service was unskilled, ill prepared, ill selected, and pompous. Again it was the Slavic countries that carried the intelligence load.

Last Hope Island reveals many aspects of WWII of which most Americans are unaware. The research here reworks the "Hollywood version" of the roles of the British and European emigrants. Olsen names the real heroes and the inadequate leaders of allied efforts against the Nazis. This is a history book that corrects history.

This is yet another fine book from Olson. Her strength is combining the large event with the associated fine print of personality, the cluster of small moments that make large differences, and a tendency to present a revised version of previously accepted accounts of history. There is here, also, a sense that history contains a sense of tragedy as events unfold and culminate, even in the face of victory.

Excellent book. I read a lot of WWII and found out much I did not know in this book. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in that time period. Well done. I will now research her other books to read. I will always look at the Polish effort in a different way after this book. They were amazing.

I have read a lot of non fiction accounts of WWII , but this book connects important elements of the partnerships and destruction of aliens and countries. To me,untold accountings of the risks citizens took to help the military defeat the Nazi machine is astounding.

An in depth retelling of the important but under acknowledged role of the government-in-exile and the vital underground activities of their subjugated populaces World War II.The book also relates the dreadful blunders that cost both unnecessary lost lives and prolonged the war. Olson also documents the heartless behavior of the British leaders to the plight of Poland during and after the war. This in spite of the magnificent role of the Polish fighters in their role in breaking the German Enigma code, their role in the air war during the blitz and in their underground activities.

This is an excellent overview of events affecting various heads of state during World War II. The writing is clear, direct, and always interesting; I learned a great deal from the book and will look for more titles by this author.

Superbly written, as are all of Lynne Olson's books, this little known tale of exiled heads-of-state and their contribution to winning World War II is a wonderful read. For those of us World War II buffs, it is a welcomed addition to Lynne Olson's continuing insights into this difficult but often inspiring period.

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