

TASK INSTRUCTIONS

The key question: Why didn't Britain bomb the death camps?

Your task: Your task is to create a presentation using our sources on why Britain did not bomb the death camps.

[Use the Power Point template for your presentation.](#)

WHY DIDN'T BRITAIN BOMB THE DEATH CAMPS?

World War 2 saw many terrible events. The war also created many controversies which still rage today. One of the biggest controversies is the mass murder of Jews and other groups in Nazi death camps. Then and now, some critics argued that Britain and its allies did not do enough about these war crimes. Common criticisms are that the Allies should have:

- Bombed the camps
 - Taken revenge actions such as attacking German civilians
 - Negotiated with the Nazis to evacuate their victims
 - Threatened the Nazis that they would be punished for their crimes
 - Tried harder to punish those who carried out the crimes
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Your task

Your task is to create a presentation using our sources on why Britain did not bomb the death camps. Insert a new slide if there is not enough room to say what you have found out. Use or adapt the following plan for your presentation:

- **Slide 1: Title:** Why didn't Britain bomb the death camps?
- **Slide 2: Background**
Comment on Nazi beliefs and actions against the Jews.
- **Slide 3: What did the Allies know?**
Comment on the information the allies have about the camps.
- **Slide 4: What could the Allies have done?**
Comment on the main issues
- **Slide 5: What did the Allies actually do?**
Comment on any steps taken
- **Slide 6: Conclusion**
Did the Allies do enough taking account of the circumstances at the time?

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EASTERN EUROPE 1939-1945: CAMPS

Extract from a letter to Prime Minister Winston Churchill by a Polish woman living in exile in Britain July 26th 1943

Catalogue ref: FO 371/34550

I am writing to beg you to stop German bestialities in Poland. May I take the liberty of suggesting the two measures by means of which this result could be achieved.

1) To send a force of Allied bombers to destroy the death camps at Treblinka and Majdanek. Those camps have been built and fitted specially for mass executions (gas and steam chambers in which several thousand people can be killed daily), it would take the Germans several months to rebuilt them, during which period many thousands human beings could be saved.

2) Immediate retaliation. I know, this is a method equally strange to the British nation as to any decent minded people, but it is the sole and only one the Germans can and will understand. If they were told that a hundred of their villages will be razed to the ground by the Allied bombers, unless mass murders in Poland or in any other occupied country, are stopped, they would stop. And if they were made to pay with the blood of their own civilians for the crimes they have committed. they would not commit them again. We know that the culprits will be punished when the Allied Nations have won this war, but by that time they will have murdered thousands and thousands more of their victims whose lives could still be saved, if the Germans were made to pay for their crimes now.

What is this source?

This is a letter written by a Polish woman living in London in 1943. After the Germans invaded Poland in 1939 large numbers of Poles were able to escape to Britain. Many served in the Armed Forces.

After the German invasion the Polish leaders who escaped formed the Polish government in exile. This was based in London.

What's the background to this source?

Throughout the 1930s Nazi leader Adolf Hitler carried out two main policies. One was to create a German empire, more "lebensraum" or living space for the Germans. The other main policy was to persecute groups that he saw as inferior races, particularly Jews. In 1939 he invaded Poland and took control of the

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western half. Conditions were bad in 1939 but they would get far worse as the war went on.

A large percentage of the population of Poland was Jewish. At first they were rounded up and put into areas of the big cities called ghettos. Many died here from starvation and disease. Many others were used as slave labour in camps in Poland or back in Germany. From 1942 so many Jews were under Nazi control that the Nazi leaders came up with plans for a 'Final Solution'. This involved building camps that were used to execute millions of Jews and other groups the Nazis regarded as inferior.

It's worth knowing that..

The Poles who were living in Britain were usually well informed about what was happening back in their homeland. Many Poles served in the armed forces or served as agents for British intelligence. See our investigation on the SOE and find out about Christine Granville.

In 1939 the Germans invaded western Poland and the Russians invaded from the east. Hitler later attacked the USSR through Poland in 1941. This made the USSR an ally of Britain but it also made Poland's position very difficult and very complicated. Many Poles regarded the USSR as being as big an enemy as Germany.

See our investigation on the SOE by looking at Western Europe's investigation on the resistance.

How will you use this source?

1. What is concerning the writer of this letter?
2. What does she want the Prime Minister to do?
3. What reasons does she give?
4. What does this letter tell you about the person who wrote it?
5. Can you use this source to support any part of your presentation?

[Use the Power Point template for your presentation.](#)