

WESTERN EUROPE 1939-1945: HAMBURG

Extract from a pamphlet relating to bombing issued by the Ministry of Information, 1942-1943

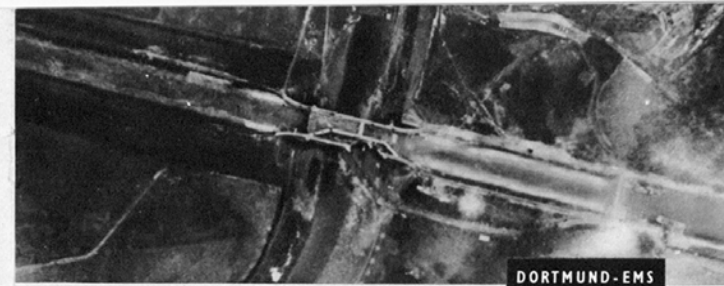
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**That spring and summer—
April to September 1941
the R.A.F. dropped
20,000 tons
of bombs on Germany and
German-occupied territory**

ALL R.A.F. RAIDS have in view the destruction of specific war objectives. They may be directed on oil refineries, or on the synthetic-oil plants which are so vital in the German war economy, an aircraft factory or key electrical equipment. At other times they are directed to warehouses and shipping.

Germany cannot practise decentralisation as much as she would like because arms factories need to be as near as possible to coal mines, heavy industry and transport. Eighty-five per cent. of Germany's essential mines and services connected with war industry are concentrated



**DORTMUND-EMS
CANAL**

Bombing accuracy of the R.A.F. The bed of the canal is seen pitted with large craters. Barges are stranded in the mud. The canal has been rendered useless for some time.

in the Ruhr! Germany could not transfer her factories on a large scale even if she would, as her most able men are tied down by army service. The labour sent to Germany from the occupied territories is insufficient to man the factories, let alone to move them. German factories must face the bombing of the R.A.F.

For internal transport, Germany has always placed much reliance on the canal system, and with the demand on rail transport for military purposes the maximum use of the canals is of great importance. The attacks of the R.A.F.

on the celebrated Dortmund-Ems canal have succeeded in interrupting the traffic for long periods and throwing back the load upon the already overburdened railways.

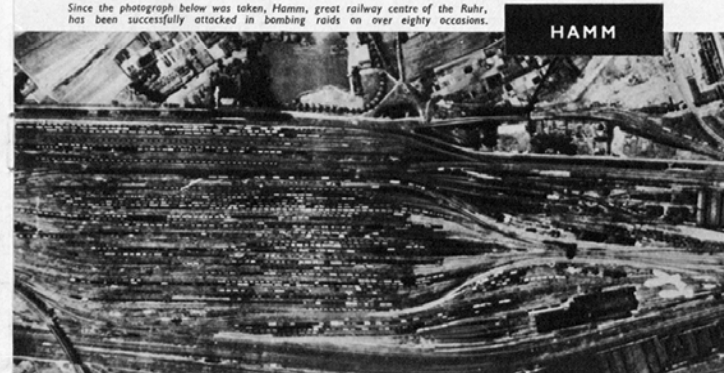
By the end of 1941, the Ruhr's great railway centre, Hamm, had been bombed over eighty times by the Royal Air Force!

Hamburg, Bremen, Hanover and the Rhineland are other centres of war industry which are frequently visited by the R.A.F. Hamburg—bombed 89 times by the end of April 1942—is also a port and has important refining plant for Germany's precious synthetic oil.



DUISBURG

This is an early reconnaissance photograph. Duisburg is the principal river port from which products of the Ruhr are sent down the River Rhine.



HAMM

Since the photograph below was taken, Hamm, great railway centre of the Ruhr, has been successfully attacked in bombing raids on over eighty occasions.

WESTERN EUROPE 1939–1945: HAMBURG**What is this source?**

This is an extract from a pamphlet produced by the Ministry of Information. The pamphlet contained several other double pages of information about German bombing of Britain and Europe and British resistance to bombing in 1940–41.

What's the background to this source?

The war began in 1939 and went well for Germany at first. By 1940 Hitler controlled most of Western Europe, apart from Britain. For a while the main attack on Britain was by air. He tried to destroy the Royal Air Force. When this failed he switched to bombing British cities.

The bombing of U.K cities by Germany, better known as the Blitz, ended in 1941. From then until 1944 the only way to attack Germany was by air. The RAF and USA air forces did this relentlessly.

It's worth knowing that...

The Germans had bombed British cities heavily in 1940–41. As a result there was strong support for the RAF to bomb German cities. This material was clearly designed to explain British policy.

There is an interesting contrast between this source and the other pamphlet about bombing that you can find in the box of sources. Britain was sensitive to criticisms of carrying out terror raids and therefore being as bad as the Nazis. This is why the government also produced pamphlets like this that explained the purpose of the Allied bombing raids.

How does this source help us to understand why the RAF bombed German cities?

1. According to this source, what is the main justification for British bombing?
2. How does this pamphlet get its message across?
3. Do you think that the British people would have supported the view of this source at the time?
4. Compare this source to the other pamphlet about bombing in the source box (artwork).
5. In 1941 a British government investigation showed that very few RAF bombs fell even as close as five miles to their target. Does that information come through in this source?
6. Can this source be used to support any of the viewpoints A-D for your debate?