

A poster produced by the Ministry of Information commenting on RAF and American bombing raids, May 1944

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## R.A.F. smash German supplies bound for the Russian front



**Eight times British bombers have flown 1,300 miles to bomb Stettin, the chief Baltic supply port for the German armies in Russia**

Stettin was last attacked by the R.A.F. in January 1944. On this and the previous occasion a great force of raiders dropped well over 500 tons of bombs

HEAVY AIR ATTACKS • A COMPARISON •

450 TONS	
	Luftwaffe's heaviest attack at the height of the London 'blitz'
500 TONS	
	R.A.F.'s heaviest raids on Stettin

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

This is a British poster produced by the Ministry of Information in 1944.

This government department controlled all aspects of information, including propaganda.

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**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. He then attacked the USSR in the summer of 1941. This became the main campaign of the war. However, Britain was anxious to try and help her Soviet allies. Britain did not have the resources to attack Germany on the ground but they did have a fleet of heavy bombers that could attack Germany by air.

When the USA joined the war in December 1941 they also had heavy bombers. From 1942 until the end of the war they pounded German targets. The bombing continued even after the D-Day landings in June 1944.

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**It's worth knowing that...**

There were probably a number of different motives behind this poster. The main one was to show the public that the Allies were united in their struggle against Germany. Another aim was to answer criticisms that the USSR was doing most of the fighting and suffering most of the losses against Germany whilst the British Empire and US forces were relatively safe in Britain. The poster was published before the D-Day landings.

Another motive for the poster may have been to show that RAF bombing was not simply targeted at civilians. The poster is clear that the raids on Stettin were designed to help Soviet forces on the ground. Another justification was the appalling treatment of civilians and prisoners by German forces in the East. The USSR lost around 20 million dead during the war. In addition to that, 6 million Jews and other racial minorities were rounded up and killed in labour camps and death camps. By comparison, bombing did not seem so savage.

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## WESTERN EUROPE 1939–1945: HAMBURG

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

1. Why have the RAF bombed Stettin?
2. In what ways was Stettin a different type of target from Hamburg?
3. Why would a raid like this be even more dangerous to aircrews than a raid on Hamburg?
4. Does this source prove that the bombing campaign was not simply a terror campaign against civilians?
5. Can this source be used to support any of the viewpoints A–D for your debate?

Use the debate summary table to record your choice of sources.