

## 5.1 NAZI POLICIES TOWARDS THE JEWS

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the Nazi policy of ghettoisation
- Understand why the Nazis introduced the Final Solution
- Understand the impact of the Final Solution.

### KEY TERM

**genocide** the deliberate killing of people of a particular nation or ethnic group

During the 1930s, life for Jews in Germany became increasingly difficult. Their civil rights were withdrawn one by one and thousands of them were sent to concentration camps. During the Second World War, the persecution of the Jews became worse. By 1942, the Nazi policy of persecution had changed to a policy of **genocide**.

During the Second World War, German forces took control of much of Europe. By the end of 1941, only Britain and the Soviet Union prevented Hitler from having total domination of Europe. By this time, following mass emigration in the 1930s, there were fewer than 200,000 Jews in Germany. As new territories were occupied, however, millions more Jews came under Nazi control. In Poland – which the Germans occupied in 1939 – there were 3 million Jews. The Germans could not remove all these people by emigration, so other approaches had to be used.

### GHETTOS

### KEY TERM

**ghetto** an area of a city or town restricted to one minority group

The Germans began a policy of **ghettoisation**. This meant that all the Jews were forced to move to **ghettos** in the cities in Poland; the Germans called these 'Jewish Quarters'. The ghettos were walled-off areas where Jews were crammed into poor housing. Food was restricted and starvation was common. Conditions were very crowded and diseases such as typhus spread rapidly. In Warsaw, the Jewish ghetto was surrounded by a 3.5 metre high wall, topped with barbed wire and broken glass. The wall was built by a German company, but the local Jewish community was forced to pay for its construction. Between January 1941 and July 1942, an average of almost 4,000 Jews died each month from disease and starvation.

In July 1942, after the introduction of the 'Final Solution' (see below), the Germans announced that the Warsaw Jews were to be 'resettled' in the east of Poland. Over 250,000 Jews were transported to camps in eastern Poland. Here, most of them were put to death.

### EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A01

A02

Explain **two** effects on Jews of the Nazi policy of setting up Jewish ghettos. (8 marks)

### HINT

You can include the effects that might not have happened until later.

### SOURCE A

The German authorities announce the resettlement of Jews living in Warsaw in July 1942.

All Jews will be resettled to the east, regardless of age and sex, with the exception of:

- Jews working for German institutions or companies
- Jews working for the Jewish Council
- Jewish Hospital staff

Every resettled Jew will be allowed to bring 15kg of luggage and all valuables, gold jewellery, money etc.

Provisions for three days must be taken.

The resettlement will start on 22 July 1942 at 11 o'clock.

The Jewish Council is responsible for the delivery of 6,000 persons daily until 4 o'clock.

Assembly point is the Jewish Hospital which has to be emptied so that the building can be used for the people being resettled.

The Jewish Council has to announce the German orders to the Jewish people.

### Punishments

- Any Jew who leaves the ghetto during the resettlement action will be shot
- Any Jew who acts against the resettlement will be shot

### ACTIVITY

- 1 Why do you think the Germans forced the Jews to live in ghettos?
- 2 Read Source A. Are there any parts of the German announcement which you find surprising? If so, which ones?
- 3 What can you learn about the Final Solution from Source B?

### DEATH SQUADS

In June 1941, the Germans invaded the Soviet Union. They quickly conquered most of the west of the country, and thousands more Jews came under Nazi control. Special units, known as *Einsatzgruppen*, followed the German army; they had orders to put Jews to death. These death squads rounded up all Jewish men, women and children (as well as Communist Party leaders and gypsies) and confiscated any valuables they owned. The victims were then forced to remove their clothing and march to fields and forests on the outskirts of towns. Here, the Jews were shot or **gassed** and their bodies were thrown into mass graves. It is thought that the *Einsatzgruppen* had murdered over 1.2 million civilians in the Soviet Union by 1943.

### EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Ejszyszki is a small town in what is now Lithuania. On 21 September 1941, a mobile killing squad entered the town. They herded 4,000 Jewish men, women and children from the town and the surrounding region into three synagogues. The Jews were held here for 2 days without food or water. Then, they were taken to cemeteries, lined up in front of open pits, and shot. Today there are no Jews in Ejszyszki.



## THE FINAL SOLUTION

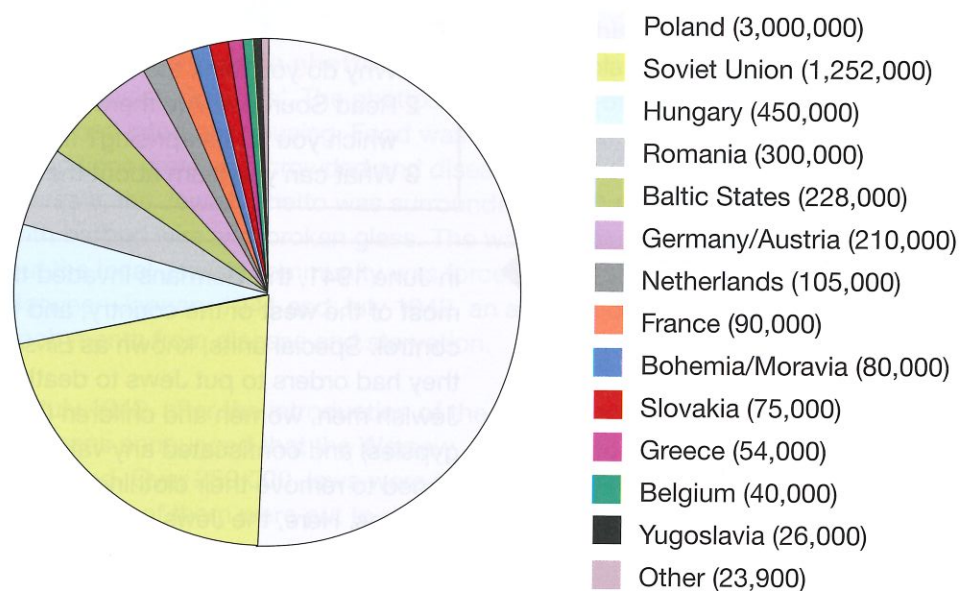
## KEY TERM

**Holocaust** destruction or slaughter on a large scale; here it refers to the slaughter of the Jews

In July 1941, the Nazis came up with a plan – a ‘Final Solution’ to the Jewish problem. Concentration camps were built in eastern Poland and Jews were sent to these camps to carry out forced labour. At a conference in Wannsee in Berlin in January 1942, the Nazis decided to convert some of these concentration camps into **extermination** camps where Jews would be killed. Over the next 4 years, almost 6 million Jews were put to death; this has become known as the **Holocaust**. Historians believe that another 5 million non-Jews (including gypsies, homosexuals, priests and people with disabilities) also died in camps such as Auschwitz, Treblinka and Sobibor.

Jews sent to the camps were divided into two groups. People who were fit enough to work were given jobs to do until they were too weak to perform them. Some of these people were forced to take part in medical experiments – to see, for example, how long a human could survive in extreme cold, or to find out the effect on one twin if the other twin was infected with a deadly disease.

The rest were killed. The extermination of so many people was a huge task and shooting proved to be too slow, so the Germans decided to use poison gas instead. Huge showers were built and up to 2,000 Jews at a time were sent into these showers, supposedly for ‘delousing’ (the removal of lice). Poison gas was then released into the chambers. After all the victims were dead, other prisoners removed the bodies. Any useful ‘by-products’ – such as gold teeth, hair and glasses – were removed and the bodies were then transported to huge ovens to be burned.



► **Figure 5.1** The number of Jews killed in death camps and by death squads. (‘Other’ includes Bulgaria: 14,000; Italy: 8,000; Luxembourg: 1,000; and Norway: 900.)

## KEEPING IT SECRET

The round-up of Jews was a massive task and would have been extremely difficult if people had known what was happening in the camps. To ensure the process went smoothly, propaganda films were made showing that the resettlement camps were no more than labour camps. The videos showed that the people were treated well and lived in good conditions. This stopped the German people from reacting negatively to what was happening. It also meant that Jewish people were willing to help organise the resettlement of fellow Jews.

## ACTIVITY

- 1 Why do you think the Germans made propaganda films showing good conditions in resettlement camps?
- 2 Why did the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto not believe that conditions in the camps were good?
- 3 ‘Maximilian Kolbe’s decision to volunteer to take the place of another prisoner at Auschwitz was pointless because they were all going to die anyway.’ Discuss with a partner whether you agree with this comment.

Over time, however, the Jews came to realise what was happening. In April 1943, there was an uprising in the Warsaw ghetto against transportation to the camps. After a month of fighting, the remaining 56,000 Jews were arrested: 7,000 of them were shot and the rest were sent to the camps.

When it became clear that Germany was losing the war, the Nazis tried to hide what had happened by digging up the railway lines and destroying some records. Allied soldiers were shocked by the reality when the camps were liberated in 1945. Rudolph Hoess, the commandant of Auschwitz camp, was hanged for war crimes at Auschwitz in 1947.

## EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

## MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

Maximilian Kolbe was a Catholic priest who ran a hospital at his Polish monastery. This hospital hid up to 3,000 Polish refugees, many of them Jews. In 1941, Kolbe’s monastery was shut down and he was arrested and transferred to Auschwitz. While Kolbe was in Auschwitz, three prisoners vanished from the camp. The enraged guards decided to starve ten men to death to deter further escapees. One of the chosen men pleaded that he had a wife and children, so Kolbe volunteered to take his place. Kolbe was the last of the ten left alive and he was finally executed by lethal injection. He was later made a saint, and there is a statue of him over the door of London’s Westminster Abbey.

## SOURCE C

Survivors in a liberated concentration camp in 1945.



## EXTRACT A

An extract from a history of Germany, written in 2009.

In the summer of 1941, a decision was taken by senior Nazi leaders to seek a permanent and final solution to the Jewish question. It was to exterminate them in death camps... Death camps were built in Poland, far away from Germany, where Jews were to be worked to death... By the summer of 1943, Jews from all over Europe were being transported to these camps... On arrival at the death camps, the Jews were divided into two groups. Those who were fit were put to work. The others were sent to the gas chambers.

## EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A04

SKILLS ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, CREATIVITY

Study Extract A.

What impression does the author give about the treatment of the Jews?

You **must** use Extract A to explain your answer.

(6 marks)

## HINT

Make sure you quote extensively from the extract to support your answer.












## 5.2 THE HOME FRONT DURING THE WAR

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the impact of the war on German civilians, especially women
- Understand the impact of 'total war'
- Understand the impact of Allied bombing.

Although there was great support for Hitler's aggressive foreign policy, when it became clear that Britain was not going to be defeated quickly, enthusiasm for the war declined. As shortages and rationing began to bite, a sense of disillusionment set in among the German people.

Date	Countries conquered
September 1939	 Poland
April 1940	  Denmark      Norway
May 1940	    France      Belgium      Netherlands      Luxembourg
April 1941	  Yugoslavia      Greece

▲ Figure 5.2 Nazi conquests in the early years of the war

## EVACUATION

As in Britain, the Germans made plans at the start of the war to **evacuate** children from major centres of population, such as Berlin. At first, many families chose not to send their children away. But as Allied bombing attacks became more common from 1942, mass evacuation began with children being sent into rural areas, such as Bavaria. About 2.5 million German children were evacuated into rural areas as part of the *Kinderlandverschickung* (KLV) programme. Unlike in Britain, those children did not stay in individual homes, but instead were placed in one of 9,000 camps supervised by Hitler Youth leaders and teachers.

## RATIONING

The first rationing began in August 1939 and included bread, meat, dairy products, soap and, from November, clothing. Food stamps were issued to civilians and the appropriate number of stamps had to be handed over when food was bought. Soldiers on home leave were also issued food stamps. Theft of stamps was a criminal offence and typically resulted in a sentence at a forced labour camp.

If you ate at a restaurant, you not only had to pay for the meal, but you also had to provide enough stamps to cover the food you had eaten. The rations were sufficient for people to maintain a basic level of nutrition, but there were many shortages, and some things were very difficult to find. Toilet paper was almost non-existent, tobacco was so rare that it could be used to buy other goods, and shortages of coal and shoes in the winters of 1939–40 and 1940–41 made people very unhappy.

In the early part of the war, goods were shipped back from occupied countries to help solve the problems of shortages, but as the war continued there were so many shortages that in May 1942 the government cut rations. Bread was restricted to about half a loaf per person per day, and meat to just 40 grams per day. Of course, anything you wanted could be bought on the black market, but at a hugely inflated price.

The German people learned to cope with food shortages. However, towards the end of the war, over 3 million Germans living in the east of the country fled west to escape from the advancing Soviet army. They found many cities destroyed by Allied bombing and a serious shortage of food. Their arrival added to the problem, and in some areas there was starvation in the last months of the war.

## TOTAL WAR

In June 1941, Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa – the invasion of the Soviet Union. At first, the Germans advanced rapidly and by November they were threatening Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. In late November, however, temperatures dropped sharply and the German advance came to a halt. The soldiers were short of both winter equipment and supplies. The Soviet forces had adopted a **scorched earth policy** as they had retreated, destroying anything that might have been useful to the Germans. As a result, the Germans found themselves caught in a prolonged and fierce battle, in which over 2 million German soldiers are thought to have died.

## KEY TERM

**scorched earth policy** a military strategy of burning or destroying crops or other resources that might be useful to an invading enemy force



## SOURCE D

An extract from the diary of Joseph Goebbels in July 1941. Before the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the two countries had been allies since 1939, when they had signed an agreement to split Poland between them.

The Führer thinks that the action will take only 4 months; I think – even less. Communism will collapse as a house of cards. We are facing an unprecedented victorious campaign.

Cooperation with Russia was in fact a stain on our reputation. Now it is going to be washed out. The very thing we were struggling against for our whole lives, will now be destroyed. I tell this to the Führer and he agrees with me completely.

## ACTIVITY

- 1 Why do you think Hitler invaded the Soviet Union?
- 2 Explain the meaning of the cartoon in Source E.

## SOURCE E

A Soviet cartoon showing Hitler ordering his troops to invade the Soviet Union.



The failures in the Soviet Union, and defeats elsewhere in the war, placed Germany under great strain. Until the failure of Operation Barbarossa it was expected that the war would be over in just a few years. But in February 1943 Goebbels told the German people that they were now involved in 'total war'. All of Germany's resources and all of its people had to be fully committed to fighting for victory. Everything had to be used for winning the war.

One of the problems Germany faced in fighting such a war was a growing shortage of labour to work in the factories. Various measures were taken to try to deal with this shortage.

- In the early years of the war, workers were recruited from the occupied countries. In October 1941, Hitler announced that Russian prisoners of war could be transported to Germany to act as slave labour. By 1944, over 7 million prisoners were working for German industry.

## EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

## THEY CLOSED THE SWEET SHOPS!

When the Germans closed small businesses during the war, there were some unintended consequences. Some people in Hanover complained that the sweet shops had been closed, even though many of these shops were run by elderly women who could certainly not transfer to war work. So, there was a shortage of sweets.

- From January 1943, all men aged 16–65 and all women aged 17–45 had to register as available for work. Small businesses which were not essential for the war effort were closed and their employees were taken into the army or transferred to war work. However, there were many exemptions to the rules about women registering for work, because Hitler did not approve of married women working.
- In August 1944 a ban on holidays for workers was introduced and the working week was increased to 60 hours.
- By 1943 the labour shortage was so serious that Hitler had to allow women to help the war effort.

Other measures were taken to help fight Germany's 'total war'. For example:

- professional sports teams and places of entertainment were shut down (although cinemas were kept open)
- postal services were reduced to save fuel
- the *Volkssturm* (Home Guard) was formed to help protect Germany from any invasion. By the end of the war, boys as young as 12 were being forced to join the *Volkssturm*.

## EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A01

A02

## SKILLS

PROBLEM SOLVING, REASONING,  
DECISION MAKING, ADAPTIVE  
LEARNING, INNOVATION

'Rationing was the most important impact on the German people of the Second World War.'

How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You may use the following in your answer:

- rationing
- war work.

You **must** also use information of your own.

(16 marks)

## HINT

Note that the question says you must use information of your own. Consider other aspects of the Second World War. Was there a change in the way Jews were treated, for example?

## THE EFFECTS OF ALLIED BOMBING

From August 1940 the British RAF carried out bombing attacks on German cities. At first they bombed military and industrial targets, but the impact on German production was minimal. From 1942 a new tactic was used. The British and Americans began bombing civilian areas in an attempt to destroy German morale. Between March and July 1943 43 German cities were bombed, causing severe damage. The raids on Hamburg in the summer of 1943 killed 42,600 German civilians and forced around 1 million others to flee the city.

The government tried to reduce the impact of the bombing of German cities with stories of bravery and determination. It also set up welfare organisations to provide food and drink, and to help find accommodation for those people whose homes had been destroyed. Despite what the German propaganda said, the bombing certainly had a negative impact on the morale of the German people. However, as happened during the Blitz in Britain, it is also true that most people just tried to carry on with their normal lives – and to turn up at work as usual – despite the difficulties.



From 1944 the Allies began to focus once more on strategic targets such as railway lines, bridges and motorways, but a British survey in 1944 estimated that the bombing raids reduced German war production by only about 1 per cent. However, some industries suffered significant setbacks as a result of the bombing. Allied raids on the Ruhr Valley in 1944 are thought to have reduced metal production by around 40 per cent. It is also true that, while the bombing may have had a limited impact on war production, it did affect the transport of war goods. For example, in 1945 the Allies found several hundred tanks at a railway yard in Munich. Allied bombing had destroyed the railway line and made it impossible to send the tanks to the front.

## EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A01

A02

Explain **two** effects on the German people of Allied bombing from 1943. (8 marks)

## HINT

Do not explain why the Allies bombed Germany – or even how. Limit your answer to what the effects were – that means what the impact was.

## EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

## VICTIMS OF THE BOMBING

Over 600,000 Germans died as a result of Allied bombing, including 76,000 children. Many of the deaths came as people sheltered in cellars to avoid being killed or injured by the falling bombs. Unfortunately for them, the firestorms created by the bombs sucked all the oxygen out of the cellars, so the sheltering Germans could not breathe. This explains why some Germans who seemed perfectly healthy collapsed in the street and died.

## ACTIVITY

- 1 What is meant by 'total war'?
- 2 Make a list of the three worst impacts of the Second World War on the civilian population of Germany. Compare your list with others in your class. Do you all agree?

## SOURCE F

The German city of Hamburg after the 1943 bombing raids. Hamburg was bombed seven times in the summer of 1943.



## THE CHANGING ROLE OF WOMEN

As you read in Chapter 4, Hitler strongly believed that a woman's place was in the home raising children. The Nazi government encouraged working women to leave paid employment and devote their time to looking after their families. Although some women had to return to work in 1936 to support the rearmament programme, there were fewer women working in 1939 than there had been in 1929.

During the war, many men left work to join the armed forces and there was a shortage of workers in the factories. The government now had the power to

conscript women to work in factories, but Hitler's opposition to women working meant that the number of female workers in industry actually dropped between 1939 and 1941.

As the war continued, however, industry could not do without women workers. In June 1941 Goering ordered that any woman who had previously been in paid employment and had no children should register for work. When the policy of 'total war' was introduced in 1943, all women aged 17–45 had to register and by mid-1943 half a million extra women were working in industry. Even so, in November 1943, Hitler turned down a request to raise the age limit to 50, though he had to agree to this in 1945. By the end of the war women made up 60 per cent of Germany's labour force. Women also played a role as auxiliaries (assistants) in the armed forces where they operated searchlights and anti-aircraft guns.

It is important to also remember the psychological impact of the war on women. Many of them lived in constant fear of hearing that husbands or sons had been killed in the fighting, others struggled to raise their family with the father away and German cities suffering from heavy bombing and food shortages. Many women were killed in air raids, many were made homeless, and many were forced to leave their homes to move to safer areas. As the war came to an end the women also had to cope with the fear that the Soviet army was nearing Germany. Nazi propaganda had led the Germans to believe that the Soviets would treat women brutally. We know that Soviet soldiers did rape millions of German women in East Prussia and Berlin and that tens of thousands of women died from the attacks or committed suicide to avoid being attacked.

## 5.3 THE GROWTH OF OPPOSITION TO HITLER

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the nature of German society during the Second World War
- Understand how and why opposition to the Nazis grew
- Understand the nature of opposition to the Nazis.

## SOURCE G

A joke told in Nazi Germany.

The Führer visits a lunatic asylum and all the patients make the Nazi salute. Then Hitler notices one man not saluting. 'Why do you not greet me in the same way as everyone else?', Hitler asks. 'Ah', says the man. 'I work here, I am not a lunatic.'

During the 1930s, any opposition to Nazi rule had been dealt with severely. Other political parties were banned, trade union leaders were arrested, the media was censored and the Churches were brought under control. German children were forced to accept 'correct' (Nazi) ideas by the Hitler Youth and the Nazi control of education, and the SS and Gestapo punished anyone who did not conform.

Despite these measures, there was still some opposition to the Nazis. Some of this was organised, such as the communist **resistance** movement which operated underground. Most, however, was just the day-to-day grumbling which exists in any society. This was often in the form of anti-Nazi jokes (see Source G and Extract A) – though it would have been very dangerous to make these jokes in public.



## EXTRACT A

From an article in an American newspaper in 2012.

Political jokes were not a form of resistance. They were a release valve for pent-up popular anger. People told jokes... because they coveted a moment of liberation in which they could let off a bit of steam. [The Nazis] rarely cracked down on joke-tellers and if they did, the punishments were mild – mostly resulting in a small fine. In the last phase of the war when the regime felt threatened by ‘dissenters’, though, this changed. A handful of death sentences were handed down to joke-tellers...

The long-term opponents of the Nazis were the German Communist Party. Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the party stepped up its secret campaigning against the government and is believed to have set up more than 100 underground cells across Germany. However, the Gestapo managed to infiltrate the party and it was never really a major threat to the Nazis.

As you saw in Chapter 4, there was opposition from within the Church. Although the Roman Catholic Church supported the German invasion of the Soviet Union, individual priests spoke out against the Nazis policies towards those with mental or physical disabilities. Members of the Protestant Confessional Church read a statement in the churches in 1943 criticising the treatment of Jews. Although Hitler was reluctant to take measures against priests and pastors, a number were executed for opposing the Nazi regime.

Among the most powerful and influential members of German society, there was also some opposition to the Nazi regime. A group called the Kreisau Circle met a number of times in 1942/3 to discuss how to oppose Nazism. The members of the group included German nobility, lawyers and politicians who did not like the way that Nazism crushed personal freedoms. However, the Gestapo found out about the group and broke it up.

As the Second World War began to have a greater impact on the everyday life of ordinary Germans, there was a definite increase in opposition to Nazi rule. As the Allied advance began to reach major German cities, there was increasing sabotage of the defence measures that German cities put in place to resist the advance. Many Germans had lost the will to resist and just wanted the war to end. But unlike when the First World War ended, there was no uprising against the government. Most Germans carried on being loyal to government until Germany was defeated.

Opposition to the Nazis was most visible among young people. Although the Hitler Youth movement was popular with many young Germans, there were others who did not agree with the military nature of the movement. They wanted greater freedom – for example, to form their own views, to dress how they liked and to listen to ‘non-Nazi approved’ music.

## THE SWING YOUTH

Members of the Swing Youth were generally middle-class Germans who wanted to listen to American and British ‘swing’ music. They particularly liked jazz, which the Nazis considered ‘degenerate’ because of its links to black Americans. Swing Youth groups started in many major German towns and the Nazis took steps to stamp them out. Some leading members of the movement were arrested and served short sentences in concentration camps.

## THE EDELWEISS PIRATES

The Edelweiss Pirate movement started in the Rhineland in 1937, before spreading to other areas of Germany. Members hated the Hitler Youth and frequently bullied or beat up its members. The Edelweiss Pirates objected to conscription and the training for military service which the Hitler Youth involved. Members were mainly working class and strongly **anti-establishment**; they continually found ways to criticise Nazi culture, and their dress and musical tastes did not follow Nazi fashion. They were also suspected of producing the anti-Nazi and anti-war **graffiti** that appeared in some German towns.

The Pirates were never really a threat to the Nazis. However, their activities did become more serious as the war progressed. For example:

- they gave shelter to army deserters and escaped prisoners from concentration camps
- they stole food and supplies from stores or freight trains
- they derailed train cars full of ammunition and supplied adult resistance groups with explosives
- in 1944, Barthel Schink (a member of the Cologne Pirates) was executed for planning to blow up a Gestapo building in Cologne.

## THE WHITE ROSE GROUP

## EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

## HANS AND SOPHIE SCHOLL

Sophie Scholl was so frightened about what the White Rose Group was doing that she slept in her brother's bed. On 18 February 1943, she and her brother went to Munich University to distribute anti-Nazi leaflets. Sophie had a few left over so she threw them over a balcony to float down to the students below. She was seen by a worker, who called the Gestapo. Hans Scholl had a draft for another leaflet in his pocket. He tried to swallow it, but the Gestapo were too quick. On 22 February 1943, just 4 days after being arrested, the Scholls were found guilty of treason and executed by guillotine. Hans Scholl's last words before he was executed were ‘Long live freedom!’

## SOURCE H

A postage stamp issued in Germany in 1961.



## ACTIVITY

‘The members of the youth groups who opposed the government were just silly young people who were never a threat to Nazi rule’. Write a 30 second speech to convince your classmates that this statement is either correct or incorrect.



## THE JULY BOMB PLOT (1944)

Hitler had almost fanatical support from the German military but some army leaders opposed his brutal methods and anti-Semitic policies. As Germany began to lose the war – particularly after the failings in the Soviet Union – these leaders decided to act. The group was led by General Ludwig Beck, Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg and the anti-Nazi politician, Dr Carl Goerdeler. The plan was that Goerdeler would be chancellor once Hitler had been killed.

On 20 July 1944, von Stauffenberg took a bomb in a briefcase into a meeting at Hitler's military headquarters in East Prussia. He then said he had an urgent phone call to make and left the meeting. Unfortunately, after von Stauffenberg had left, one of the other army leaders moved his briefcase. Four people were killed when the bomb went off, but Hitler survived.

## ACTIVITY

Do you think things would have been very different in Germany if Hitler had been killed in the 1944 Bomb Plot? Explain why you think this.

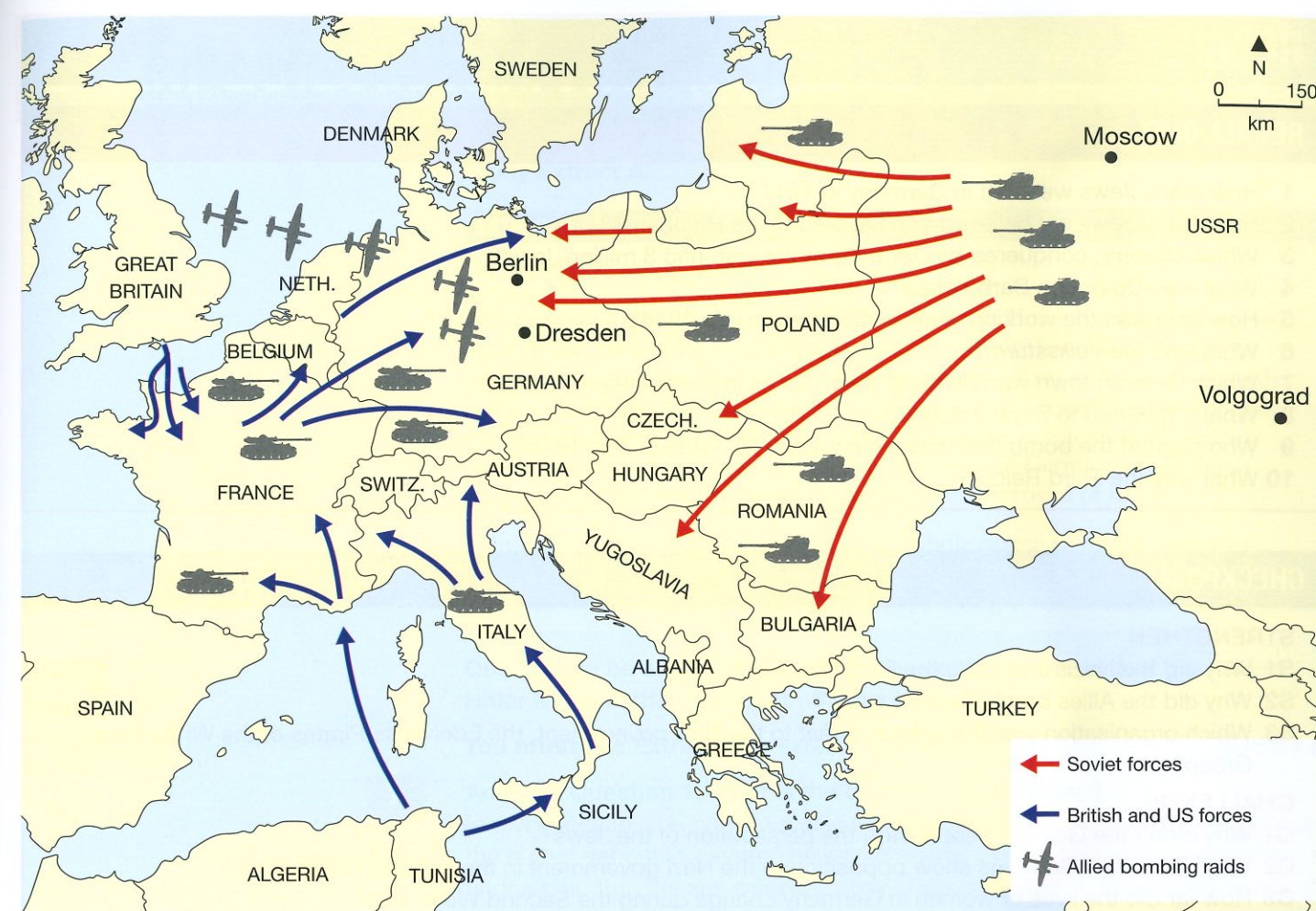
## THE EXTENT OF OPPOSITION TO THE NAZIS

It is very difficult to judge how much of a threat the Nazis faced from opposition to their rule. Propaganda suggested everyone loved the government and any acts of opposition were not publicised. We know that there was resistance to Nazi policies from, for example, the Churches, the Communists, the Jews, the youth movements and the trade unions. What we don't know is how much support there was amongst the general population for such opposition.

The growth in membership of the Nazi Party, and its success in elections, suggests that Nazi rule was very popular in the early years, as it dealt with problems caused by the Depression. However, that support declined as the war began to go badly and there were shortages and hardships in the towns and cities. For example, in October 1944 there was an uprising in Cologne against Gestapo and Nazi officials which resulted in dozens of Germans being publicly hanged. However, it seems much more likely that, despite the fact that there were 11 attempts on Hitler's life, the opposition to the Nazis was not a real threat to their rule. Some Nazi policies, such as euthanasia, did lead to protest but the Nazi regime was strong enough to deal with this. It may well be that opposition to Nazi rule was seen more in 'the little things', such as absenteeism from work (in December 1941 over 7,000 workers were arrested for not attending work), buying on the black market and failing to report anyone seen to be opposing Nazi policies.

## THE END OF THE THIRD REICH

By 1945, Germany was close to defeat. Allied forces were advancing on Germany from the west and the Soviet Red Army was approaching from the east (see Figure 5.3). To make matters worse, the Allies increased their bombing of German cities. The German troops fought bravely and it is believed that more soldiers died in the last 4 months of the war than in the whole of 1942 and 1943 put together. Huge numbers of refugees fled the cities to avoid the bombing or the advancing Red Army in the east. Up to a million civilians died from hunger, disease and cold.



▲ Figure 5.3 The defeat of Germany

On 28 April, Hitler married his long-time girlfriend, Eva Braun. Two days later, he shot himself and Eva took her own life with cyanide. Hitler left the control of Germany to Admiral Doenitz, who surrendered to the Allies on 7 May 1945. The Third Reich had come to an end.



## RECAP

### RECALL QUIZ

- 1 How many Jews were left in Germany in 1941?
- 2 How many Jews are believed to have died in the Holocaust?
- 3 Which country, conquered by Germany in the war, had 3 million Jews?
- 4 What was Operation Barbarossa?
- 5 How long was the working week in Germany in late 1944?
- 6 What was the *Volkssturm*?
- 7 Which German town was bombed seven times in the summer of 1943?
- 8 What happened to Sophie Scholl?
- 9 Who planted the bomb that was supposed to kill Hitler in July 1944?
- 10 What was the Third Reich?

### CHECKPOINT

#### STRENGTHEN

- S1** Why did the Nazis introduce the Final Solution?  
**S2** Why did the Allies bomb German cities?  
**S3** Which organisation was the greater threat to the Nazi government, the Edelweiss Pirates or the White Rose Group?

#### CHALLENGE

- C1** Why didn't the German people stop the persecution of the Jews?  
**C2** Why did so few Germans show opposition to the Nazi government in the Second World War?  
**C3** How far did the lives of women in Germany change during the Second World War?

### SUMMARY

- When the Germans first conquered territory in Europe, they forced the Jews to live in ghettos.
- In 1942, the Germans introduced the Final Solution.
- The Germans made propaganda films to disguise what they were doing.
- The Germans introduced rationing during the Second World War.
- The German invasion of the Soviet Union proved to be a major mistake.
- In September 1943, Goebbels announced that Germany was now in 'total war'.
- Labour shortages meant that more women had to work during the war.
- Allied bombing killed more than 600,000 German civilians.
- A number of different protest groups started among young German people.
- There was an attempt to blow up Hitler in 1944.
- Hitler committed suicide in April 1945.
- Germany surrendered in May 1945.