



TOTAL WAR 1941-45

From 1943 the war started to swing against the Germans and the impact on the civilians on the home front became significantly greater. The entry of the USA into the war, the turning of the tide in Russia all played an impact on German morale and conditions. Goebbels called for a Total War in 1943.. meaning that everything in society was mobilised towards war.



ECONOMICALLY,
- All non essential businesses were closed.
- targets were placed on many factories and raw materials were prioritised for the war effort.
- factories were rationalised. They were made much more efficient and used mass production techniques to ensure high productivity. Economics minister SPEER. managed to cut manpower hours on the Panzer tank assembly line by 50%. He also increased productivity on munitions by 60%

LABOUR SHORTAGES
The massive movement of men to the battle fronts caused a huge labour shortage in Germany. This meant that factories were struggling to improve their productivity.

To make up this gap foreign workers were used. This may have meant compulsory orders to bring them to Germany, it may have meant slave labour or POW's

There were more than 6.4 million foreign workers in Germany by 1944. Most were forced to leave their countries this represented 21% of the work force.

WOMEN
There was huge reluctance to recruit women into the war effort. However by 1943 the pressure was so great that the Nazis obliged up to 3 million to sign up for work. However, only 400,000 were accepted. By 1944 however over 41% were employed in an effort to cover up from the devastating losses in military setbacks like Stalingrad. This represented 1 million women in employment.

Women's health suffers in the war due to
- the bombing
- the food shortages
- the worries about their sons/ husbands/ brothers etc



World War Two had a profound effect on German civilians. In the first few years of the war the impact was minimal amid a series of stunning German military victories. However, this was soon followed by defeats and retreats. Germany was soon being bombed night and day by carpet bombing and life became very tough

BACKGROUND



THE IMPACT OF WAR ON GERMAN CIVILIANS



SOCIAL
Professional sports matches , magazines and sweet shops were all shut down for the duration of the war.

RATIONS
It was clear that things were becoming bad.
In 1939 meat was rationed at 700 gms a person a week
By 1945 this was down to 250 gms
In 1943 they were even killing zoo animals.



1939-41 Early war impact

German civilians did not welcome the war with UK and France (unlike in 1914) HOWEVER, a series of stunning military victories between 1939 and 1941 saw Germany conquer most countries from France to the gates of Moscow. German civilians were buoyed and encouraged by this. This also helped soften up the impact of war... to an extent.



BOMBING
Bombing had a huge effect on Germany. With the US involvement, it meant that the allies could bomb night and day.

Many German cities were carpet bombed which didn't afford much accuracy and led to many civilian deaths and injuries as well as massive destruction. The allies aimed to break civilian morale and affect the economy

Cities like Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt and Hamburg were all devastated. Hamburg was engulfed in a huge firestorm due to the dry weather at the time and strong winds. 45,000 people were killed. The heat was so intense that the tar boiled sticking people to the road. Dresden was particularly cruelly targeted toward the end of the war with ghastly consequences. 150,000 died over two nights and much of the once beautiful city was destroyed.

800,000 civilians died in bombing
50% of bombs fell on residential areas
Many people fled to the countryside ; many had...

Some countries taken over by Germany;
1939: Poland
1940: France, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway
1941, Greece, Yugoslavia and much of Eastern Europe

RESOURCES
Germany can reduce the impact of war and solve part of its resources problem by taking resources from the countries it seized. This included gold reserves, natural resources and of course people.

FOREIGN LABOUR
Germany used prisoners of war and people from other countries conquered to fill the labour gap left by men heading to war.
By May 1940 there were more than 3.5 million fewer workers in the workforce than 1 year earlier

HOWEVER, there were other obvious impacts of war:

RATIONING: Germany had to introduce rationing as soon as the war began! This was much earlier than Britain. This was partially to do with poor economic management from Goring in particular. Germany was still reliant on imports for 1/3rd of its raw materials despite GORING'S promises of autarky (self sufficiency)
- Rations actually ensured that people received a balanced diet. As it was available to everyone it actually led to a better diet for many!
- Ersatz products were produced. These were artificial replacements. For example ersatz coffee was made from barley and acorns.
- clothing was rationed by November 1939.
- warm water was rationed too; warm baths were only available twice a week! Soap was also rationed as was toilet paper!
This led to a very strong and buoyant black market (illegal trading)



EVACUATION OF CHILDREN
Children were evacuated en masses to the countryside from the big cities due to the fear of air raids. This actually wasn't very popular and many returned



PROPAGANDA AND CAMPAIGNS
Propaganda was organised to boost morale and the war effort.
Campaigns were organised to collect metal items for melting down like pots and pans. 1.5 million items of fur and 67 million wooden items were collected to supply soldiers freezing on the eastern front.



As the war drew to a close, Germany struggled to stay fighting. It began to use its elderly and young people to fight in the Volkstrum people's home guard. They were not trained and many died. Young boys got jobs such as telegraph or post boys ; girls helped out in kindergartens and helped those affected by the war.