HARD TIMES



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The day after Germany's Luftwaffe (Air Force) bombed Coventry (England), children search for school books—amidst their school's ruins—which may have survived the devastation. <u>The photo</u>, taken on April 10, 1941, is online via the Imperial War Museum and Wikimedia Commons. <u>IWM Non-Commercial License</u> (although the Crown Copyright has now expired). Click on the image for a better view.

Conditions in Great Britain, during World War II, were much more desperate than they were in America. During summer, children worked on farms and people grew crops anywhere they could find space. Still there was not enough food.

A British schoolboy describes the effects of rationing on school meals:

... went from mediocre to unspeakable. We had mincemeat, potato or cabbage, some kind of milk pudding, a lot of stodge, with sauces that became more and more watery ... At one stage lunch consisted of rather watery soup, based on onions, followed by hunks of bread and cheese - that was our economy measure.

Good red meat, which was rationed rather strictly, we had twice a week ... One wag said that ... dried eggs, which were in plentiful supply, should be called dregs ... Sweets were rationed, the making of ice cream banned after 1942, on the grounds that ... it had no food value, and was a diversion of valuable resources.

All meat became very scarce ... So our diet became very monotonous. There were pies which were based on potato and carrot and - we thought it was sawdust - soya beans ...' David Howell (Quoted in Don't You Know There's A war On?: The People's Voice 1939-45 by Jonathan Croall—to be reissued in 2005)

In every country affected by the war, children had to deal with family separations, <u>deaths of loved ones</u> and the need to "<u>make do and mend</u>" clothes and toys. However, children in Britain had added burdens as they <u>coped</u> with <u>evacuations</u>, air raids, gas masks and <u>destroyed homes</u>.

Beginning on September 1st, 1939 (two days before <u>war was declared</u>), the British government began the largest mass <u>evacuation</u> of people in the country's history. To avoid the <u>terror</u> of Hitler's nightly bombing during "<u>The London Blitz</u>" (which began on September 7, 1940), <u>evacuations continued</u>.

It is estimated that parents sent about 800,000 <u>schoolchildren</u> into the British countryside. Children <u>traveled by train</u> (this BBC audio report covers the story of children departing Waterloo Station), often with their classmates and teachers. Another half-million young children, with their mothers, <u>fled London</u>.

It was an anguishing time for British civilians. Hermann Goering, Commander-in-Chief of Hitler's Luftwaffe (air force), believed that a <u>powerful show of force</u>—with intense, nightly <u>bombings of London</u> and other cities—would break the will of the British people. It had the <u>opposite effect</u>, strengthening their resolve to <u>resist Germany</u>.

On the other hand, <u>devastation in Coventry</u>—resulting from a <u>massive ten-hour air attack</u> on <u>November 14-15</u>, <u>1940</u>—caused <u>utter despair</u> among its residents. Worried that the <u>BBC's national reporting of events</u> in Coventry might cause despair throughout the country, the government considered taking over the BBC for a time. (They did not.)

The <u>worst time</u> of all, during the Battle of Britain, was the last night of the blitz. On May 10, 1941, about 3,000 Londoners died.

Although America did not experience homeland bombings like Britain did (this is an almshouse <u>flattened</u> on February 10, 1943), the U.S. still imposed certain blackout conditions. During 1942's All Star baseball game, on July 6th, the mayor of New York City allowed play to continue until the official blackout time of 9:30 p.m.

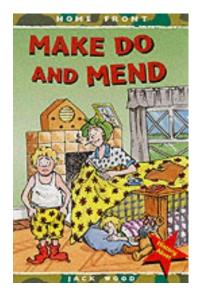
Not only did people have to deal with curfews, blackouts, and a lack of daily commodities, they had to put-up with buying necessities where the family was registered. During the war, in other words, one did not shop at the most convenient grocery store!

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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/HARD-TIMES-Children-in-War

Media Stream

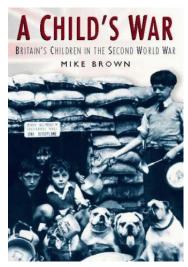


Make Do and Mend - by Jack Wood

Image online, courtesy <u>amazon.com</u> website.

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A Child's War - by Mike Brown

Image online, courtesy the <u>abbeys.com</u> website.

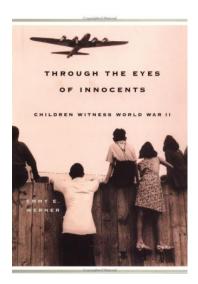
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Destroyed Homes

Image online, courtesy the factandwhimsey blog.

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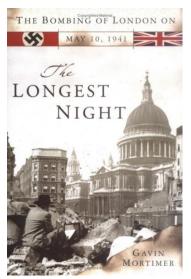


Through the Eyes of Innocents - by Emmy E. Werner

Image online, courtesy amazon.com website.

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The Longest Night - by Gavin Mortimer

Image online courtesy <u>amazon.com</u> website.

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Surveying the Bombing Damage

Image online, courtesy Imperial War Museum.

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British Children - Evacuation During World War II

Clip, online courtesy Amyewer Channel at YouTube.

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Battle of Britain - Death and Dogfights

Executive Producer:

Guido Knopp

7, 1940.

Writer/Director:

Ralf Piechowiak

Alexander Berkel

Clip online, courtesy YouTube.

PD

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Battle-of-Britain-Death-and-Dogfights

Battle of Britain - Shelter in London's Underground

Clip from "The Battle of Britain," a documentary of the London Blitz which began on September 7. 1940.

Clip from "The Battle of Britain," a documentary of the London Blitz which began on September



Executive Producer:

Guido Knopp

Writer/Director:

Ralf Piechowiak

Alexander Berkel

Clip online, courtesy YouTube.

PD

View this asset at:

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Coventry - The Devastation Begins

Clip from the BBC's *Timewatch* - "Blitz: The Bombing of Coventry." Copyright, BBC, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the program.

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Coventry - Survivors Tell Their Story

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Coventry - Decimated by Nazi Bombs

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