



## Document Based Essay Question

### THE BLITZ AND CIVILIAN MORALE

**Aims-** To encourage students to engage actively with historical documents. To build analytical and critical thinking skills. To formulate evidence-based arguments. To practice writing concisely and persuasively.

#### QUESTION:

The British government demonstrated considerable concern over the impact of strategic aerial bombing on civilian morale, but what was the actual effect of German bombing on British people's support of the war effort? Was the British government right to be concerned?

Drawing on your knowledge of Britain during World War II, use the following documents to explore the techniques the government employed to record and analyze the severity of the bombing, and to assess and manage civilian morale.

#### DOCUMENTS:

1. 'Act now! Your family looks to you', Advertisement from the Ministry of Home Security, 1940. History of Advertising Trust O&M wartime book no. 2:  
<http://www.warstateandsociety.com/Content/wtss.hatom/000002/168/001>
2. Observations by Sir Waldron Smithers on people rendered homeless in the London area and the effects of enemy bombing on their morale, October 1940. HO 199/419.  
<http://www.warstateandsociety.com/Content/wtss.ho199/000419/001>
3. Home Security Daily Intelligence Reports—reports prepared twice a day for the Home Security War Room, recounting the times, locations, and impacts of individual enemy attacks on the United Kingdom. Reports 973-1151, 1 January - 31 March 1941. HO 203/6.  
<http://www.warstateandsociety.com/Content/wtss.ho203/000006/001> (pp. 1-30)
4. Christmas Under Fire (Blitz 1940). Film script produced by the Ministry of Information, 1941. INF 6/329.  
<http://www.warstateandsociety.com/Content/wtss.inf6/000329/001>
5. Conditions in selected blitzed towns, reports by Mass Observation and circulated by the Admiralty, 1941. HO 199/442. See especially the reports on Coventry and on Bristol, Southampton & Cheltenham (pp. 1-20).  
<http://www.warstateandsociety.com/Content/wtss.ho199/000442/001>
6. Analysis of the Effects of Raids from Nov 1940 to Apr 1941 on the Staff of 6 Large Firms: Analysis of Completed Questionnaires. Ministry of Home Security, 1941. HO 192/1236.  
<http://www.warstateandsociety.com/Content/wtss.ho192/001236/001>
7. A report analysing the possible correlation between Air-Raid Damage in Birmingham and the rate of Conscientious Objection. Ministry of Home Security, 1942. HO 192/1192.  
<http://www.warstateandsociety.com/Content/wtss.ho192/001192/001>
8. Air Raid Damage Reports for Canterbury. Ministry of Home Security Region No 12: South Eastern Headquarters: Tunbridge Wells & Canterbury). 31 October - 1 November 1942. HO 192/1000. See report and photographs for Canterbury, pp. 1-2 and 22-70. <http://www.warstateandsociety.com/Content/wtss.ho192/001000/001/022>
9. 'Down our street', Advertisement from the National Savings Committee, 1943. History of Advertising Trust O&M wartime book no. 1: <http://www.warstateandsociety.com/Content/wtss.hatom/000001/316/001>
10. 'A note on the meaning and measurement of morale of towns in relation to air raid.' Ministry of Home Security, 1943. HO 199/456. <http://www.warstateandsociety.com/Content/wtss.ho199/000456/001>



## Seminar Topics

## THE PEOPLE'S WAR

### FURTHER READING:

B. Beaven & D. Thoms (1996) The Blitz and Civilian Morale in three Northern Cities, 1940–1942, *Northern History*, 32:1, 195-203, DOI: 10.1179/007817296790175191

Craig Armstrong (2007) A Northern Community at War, 1939–1945: 'Tyneside Can Take It!', *Northern History*, 44:1, 133-152, DOI: 10.1179/174587007X165397

E. W. Jenkins (2002) Wartime Evacuation, *Northern History*, 39:2, 307-309, DOI: 10.1179/nhi.2002.39.2.307

Robert Mackay (2006) 'An Abominable Precedent': the BBC's Ban on Pacifists in the Second World War, *Contemporary British History*, 20:4, 491-510, DOI: 10.1080/13619460600612479

Mark B. Pohlard (2005) The Appreciation of Ruins in Blitz-Era London, *The London Journal*, 30:2, 1-24, DOI: 10.1179/ldn.2005.30.2.1

Robert Mackay. *The Test of War: Inside Britain 1939-1945*. London: Routledge, 1999, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203214718>

Mary Evans and David Morgan. *The Battle for Britain: Citizenship and Ideology in the Second World War*. London: Routledge, 1993, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203191514>

Jonathan Croall. *Don't You Know There's a War On? The People's Voice 1939-45*. London: Routledge, 1989, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315648217>



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