GEOGRAFIA ETA HISTORIA DBH4



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**TESTUA**

Life in the home front:

World War I was a total war: the fighting countries used all their resources in order to try to win. In addition, with the new tactic of aerial bombardment, the civilian population was also in danger. For these reasons the war effort included not only soldiers on the front, but civilians at home. Civilian activity to support the war became known as the home front.

1. **A war economy:**

During the war, states intensified their intervention in the economyin order to guarantee that both civilians and troops received necessary supplies. They put into effect what is known as a wartime economy: Freedom of production and trade were suspended, and only the state could decide what and how much should be produced.

1. **Working women:**

One indirect effect of war was that women began to work outside the home.

Millions of men left their homes to become soldiers, leaving a huge gap in the labour force. To fill the gap, millions of women took jobs traditionally associated with men during this period. Theybecame police officers, bus drivers, mechanics, or farm workers.

However, women mainly worked in weapons factories, building propellers, mortar shells and rifles, or packing ammuntion. This was hard and dangerous work. Women worked as many as 70 hours a week and handled toxic materials that could damage their skin or respiratory system.

Other women worked as nurses or assistants on the front. There were even women spies, such as the famous Mata-Hari.

Women played a vital role in the war and showed their capacity for any kind of work. When the war was over, many countries granted women political rights.

1. **Hunger and rationing:**

The war caused a decrease in food production and importation. Governments set limits on the prices of basic items and employed rationing: each person was assigned a daily food, people needed to show their ration books in certain shops.

Many civilians grew food in their gardens. Food substitution was another solution. For example in Britain, bread was made from dried potatoes, oats, barley and hay**.**

Despite all these efforts, thousands died of hunger

1. **Aerial bombings:**

In addition to hard work and a poor diet, civilians were also at risk of dying in an aerial bombing. Britain and France suffered most from bombings. The London underground was used as a shelter during German air raids. Between 1917 and 1918, over 300000 people used the underground for this purpose.

**c) War Propaganda:**

Governments used propaganda to convince men to enlist and also to motivate troops and civilians.

Victories were highly prised, defeats were minimised and the enemy was shown as a monster to be destroyed. Hundreds of propaganda posters covered city walls and shop windows, while optimistic news of the war reached home through newspapers and radio. Bad news was often censored so as not to demoralise soldiers or civilians. Other news told of supposed atrocities committed by the enemy.

**HISTORY 4. Santillana Richmond**

