

# THE HOME FRONT



The government intervened in all lives in Britain during the First World War. They introduced the concept of the 'Home Front,' in order to adjust the country's economy and general public for war.

One of the government's primary aims was to prevent food shortages. At the start of the war, food shortages were self-imposed after initial panic buying. 1916 was a bleak year for families, with the news from the Battle of the Somme and food in short supply. In April, Britain only had six weeks of wheat left and bread was a staple part of most diets. Suddenly the war was brought home to most families. Food prices rose and by October 1916, coal was in such short supply that it was rationed by the number of rooms a family had in its house.

In cities across Europe food queues became a common sight. Germany introduced government controls on food, but despite this, from 1916 onwards, Germans became increasingly malnourished. The Russian revolution (1917) had its origins in urban food riots. Rationing was an idea which was not popular with the British public. However, in 1917, German submarines began targeting merchant ships. This had a drastic impact on Britain's food supply. Britain introduced rationing in London early in 1918 and extended it nationwide by the summer.

The French equivalent of the home front was known as the Union Sacr  (sacred union), an alliance between government, industry, and civilians.

The German version, was called the Hindenburg Program, after General Paul von Hindenburg (1847 - 1934).