**1939**

* **May**– as a result of the Four-Year Plan – the number of women in paid employment had increased – 6.4 million married women in employment – women made up 37.4% of the industrial labour force
* **August**– decrees establishing a food rationing system were issued – allocations established at the beginning of the war remained largely unchanged for first 2 years
* **August**– while the Nazi-Soviet pact was in force, there were also imports of grain from the Soviet Union
* **2rd September 1939** – Hitler issued a decree for the conversion of the whole of Germany into a war footing
* **3rd September**– Hitler imposed wage reductions and a ban on the payment of bonuses for overtime, Sunday work and night-shift working – widespread discontent – absenteeism
* **October**– wage levels were restored to their pre-war levels – payment of bonuses was reintroduced – wage rates were not allowed to increase
* **November**– clothing was included in the rationing scheme as a result of panic buying due to a permit needed to purchase clothes
* Membership of the Hitler Youth and BDM became compulsory for al young people
* Hitler did not expect the war to begin until operation Barbarossa in 1941 – economic and military planning had been based on these assumptions
* **T**he Roman Catholic Church supported Germany’s war aims
* **1939 – 1941** – no serious food shortages – shortages of coal, shoes, soap and washing powder did cause discontent from time to time
* **September 1939 – June 1941** – phase 1 – Blitzkrieg – after defeating Poland in east, German forces achieved a series of quick victories against various European countries
* **September 1939 – January 1941** – labour force in armaments production increased from 21% to 55% however the supply of weapons grew very slow – army demanded highly specialised equipment – expensive – different versions of same weapon – mass production impossible – standardised weapons cheaper
* **1939 – 1941** – number of women workers in industry declined – growing number of women worked in agriculture
* **1939 – 1941** – German armed forces suffered from shortages of weapons and equipment – these supply problems did not hamper Germany in early stages of war since campaigns against Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France all achieved quick successes through the highly effective use of Blitzkrieg tactics
* **1939 – 1949** – Goering’s failings were masked by successes of German armed forces

**1940**

* **June**– after France was defeated, Britain was blamed for prolonging the war
* **June**– 250,000 women had been conscripted – those who were conscripted were merely transferred from production of consumer goods to war work – regime also provided generous benefits for families of conscripted soldiers
* Industry needed more women workers – Hitler refused to sanction this
* Youth was liable to be called into the army force at the age of 19
* Bishop Galen spoke out in a sermon to condemn the Euthanasia programme that killed 270,00 mentally and physically disabled people – led to temporary halting of the programme – 3 priests who distributed sermon executed.
* Since 1940, Bonhoeffer had been banned from speaking in public – his criticisms could not reach a wide audience in Germany – he had extensive contacts abroad
* **January 1940 – June 1941** – Hitler made 9 major speeches – vital in bolstering morale
* **June 1940 – 1942** – foreign workers in German industry were mainly recruited from occupied countries in western Europe – after invasion of USSR dramatic increase in prisoners of war

**1941**

* **June**– after the invasion of the Soviet Union, some rations were reduced – meat was cut from 500g to 400g, then cut again
* **June**– Germany invaded Russia
* **June**– Goering issued a decree that all female workers who were receipt of family allowance – and had given up paid employment but not produced children – should be forced to register for work or lose their allowance – 130,000 extra women sent to armament factories
* **October**– Hitler agreed that Russian prisoners of war could be used as slave labour
* **December**– the Red Army launched a counter-attack against the Germans – halted German advance
* **December**– Germany declared war on USA – hope of another quick victorious war was over – Germany now faced a world war against the Grand Alliance of the USSR, USA and Britain
* **December**– some 4 million foreign workers employed in Germany
* Age was reduced to 18 for youth to be called into army
* German forces became stretched with the war in the Mediterranean and the start of operation Barbarossa – supply problems began to hinder the German war effort
* Weaknesses of four-year plan and Goering’s management became increasingly apparent
* Jewish problem led to radical new policies – Nazi regime had failed to completely conquer the Soviet Union – previous plans to transport Jews. To Madagascar or Siberia had to be abandoned
* Catholic church wholeheartedly gave support to the invasion of USSR
* Jewish resistance group led by the Bielski brothers – became permanent community – acts of sabotage – provided refuge for Jews escaping Ghettos
* Catholic church wholeheartedly gave support to the invasion of USSR
* KPD had 89 underground cells operating in Berlin – issued leaflets attacking regime – did not attract widespread support
* **June – December 1941** – phase 2 – the spreading war
* **1941 – 1943** – ‘production miracle’ – German aircraft production increased by 200% - tank production increased by 250% - aircraft production increased from 180% per month to 1000% per month

**1942**

* **20 January 1942** – Wannsee Conference – key moment in implementation of systematic murder – Hitler and Himmler were not in attendance – chairman was Heydrich – the most powerful man in the SS after Himmler – organisation of preparations for the final solution to Jewish question – decision to exterminate Jews had already been made before conference
* purpose of meeting was to clarify previous confusions regarding deportations to the east
* **February**– Todt – armament minister was replaced by Albert Speer – Speer was given full executive powers to establish a central planning agency
* **March**– British Royal Air Force carried out a major bombing raid on the city of Lubeck – this was the start of the Allied mass bombing campaign where German cities were attacked day and night by both British and American air forces – often with 1000 aircraft at a time
* Despite the measures taken – German economy did not reach a state of full mobilisation until 1942
* **November**– 120 camps where 17-year-old military youth would attend 3-week courses under army were established
* **January 1942 – January 1943** – phase 3 – the turning of the tide – German losses in the USSR started to mount in the harsh winter conditions
* **February 1942 – February 1943** – more than half the Jews in the holocaust exterminated
* **1942 – 1943** – mass killings were accelerated and given higher priority than military needs
* **1942 – 1943** – Gestapo had considerable success in destroyed the communist underground network
* **1942 – 1943** – white rose group – led by Hans and Sophie Scholl and supported by professor Kurt Huber attacked the Nazi treatment of Jews and Slav people – they issued 6 pamphlets
* **1942 – 1943** – Kreisau circle held 3 meetings before group was broken up by Gestapo – believed in personal freedom and individual responsibility – included elite who opposed Nazism
* **1942 – May 1945** – British and Americans carried out sustained bombing offensive against Germany’s industrial capacity and civilian morale
* **1942 – 1945** – death camps in operation – those deemed ‘unproductive’ were selected for immediate transfer to gas chambers
* **1942 – 1945** – Nazi regime implemented its so-called ‘Final Solution’ to the ‘Jewish question’ – WW2 essential precondition

**1943**

* **January**– defeat at Stalingrad was a major turning point in the war, both militarily and on the home front – signalled a defeat of Nazi propaganda – news of defeat was a shock to public morale
* **January**– rising broke out in Warsaw Ghetto – first attempt to crush rising failed
* **January**– defeat at Stalingrad meant the total mobilisation of labour had become essential
* **January**– decree forced all women aged 17 – 45 to register for work – illustrated that Hitler had abandoned his ideological objection to the employment of married women – many exemptions
* **January** – all men aged 16 – 65 and women aged 17 – 45 had to register for work with their local labour office – small businesses closed down
* **February**– German surrender at Stalingrad
* **February 1943** – white rose group painted anti-Nazi slogans on buildings – eventually caught by Gestapo and executed
* **February** – Goebbels declared that Germany was engaged in a ‘Total War’ – main criticism was that these measures were being introduced too late – Hitler myth began to decline
* Failure of U boat campaign to bring Britain to its knees
* British and Americans attempted to cripple Germany’s war effort through unrelenting bombings against German cities
* **May**– resistance in Warsaw ghetto finally crushed by 2000 German groups, using heavy weapons and supported by air strikes
* **June-** fewer than half a million extra women joined industrial labour force
* **November**– Hitler refused to raise the upper age limit for women to register for work to 50
* bombing campaign reached an even greater intensity
* women increasingly assigned to auxiliary roles within the armed forces – women began to replace men in servicing anti-aircraft guns
* age was reduced to 17 for youth to be called into army
* special Hitler Youth division was set up for 16-18-year-old boys selected by Hitler Youth group leaders – the division was sent to France in 1944 and saw action in the Battle of Normandy
* Bonhoeffer was arrested and held in prison until his execution in 1945
* **February 1943 – May 1945** – Phase 4 – ‘Total War’ and the defeat of Germany
* **March – July 1943** – 43 German cities being attacked
* All of Germany’s main industrial and port cities were attacked
* There was a high concentration of raids on cities in the Rhineland and Ruhr areas
* **1943 – 1944** – gains in production achieved by Speer occurred despite the damage inflicted by the air raids

**1944**

* **June**– the D-Day landings in Normandy opened a second front in western Europe
* **August**– Paris had been liberated – German forces suffered further reverses in the east – defeat began to be accepted as inevitable – SD report – people lost faith in Fuhrer – Hitler myth crumbled away in final months of the war
* **August**– total ban on holidays was imposed – working week was increased 60 hours – extra payments for working overtime were abolished
* **September**– conscription into Volkssturm – for 16-60-year olds who were not fit for active service – young men dug anti-tank ditches and trained to use anti-tank weapons
* **November**– when soviet armies had advanced deep into Poland, Nazis moved to close down the killing machine and try to conceal what they had been up to – the crematoria at Auschwitz were blown up and hastily covered over – surviving prisoners pressed into forced marches westwards – away from Red Army
* **November** – leaders of Edelweiss pirates publicly hanged
* millions of Germans living in Poland, East Prussia and Czechoslovakia were driven out by hostile local people – forced to trek westwards in advance of the soviet forces
* Hitler agreed to raise the upper age limit for women to register for work to 50
* women began to operate searchlights
* army established auxiliary corps for women serving with the armed forces – duties mainly secretarial and working on radio and telephone communications – but in many cases this involved serving on the front line
* militarisation of women was taken further in final stages when women’s battalions of the army were established, and women were trained for combat roles
* 7 million foreign workers in Germany – another 7 million in occupied countries doing work for Germans – foreign labour made up a quarter of the German workforce
* when the Reich faced defeat the killings were accelerated – coming to an end only when invading allies liberated the camps in 1945
* it was clear Germany faced inevitable defeat in the war – this realisation did not cause the final solution to be abandoned – it had the reverse effect
* as German forces pulled back, Nazi regime carried out a frantic programme of evacuations and forced marches – camps were hurriedly closed down and inmates were sent on long marches westwards away from Red Army – death marches caused terrible suffering and loss of life
* 250,000 – 400,000 estimated to die from death marches – continued to end of war
* Edelweiss pirates – anti-Hitler youth – tried to avoid conscription – organised independent expeditions in countryside
* Cologne group became linked to an underground group that helped army deserters, escaped prisoners of war, forced labourers and prisoners from concentration camps – they obtained supplies by attacking depots – the chaos and destruction caused by bombing provided the conditions for developing underground activity

**1945**

* **January 1945** – Soviet forces advancing westwards through Poland liberated Auschwitz
* **January 1945** – Soviet forces themselves entered Germany – 3.5 million Germans fled their homes to escape the fighting – responsibility for evacuations lay with local Gauleiters
* People forced to walk hundreds of miles facing cold, hunger, disease and attacks by allied forces
* Estimates of people who died on these marches were from 500,000 to over 1 million
* When survivors finally reached western Germany, they found cities devastated by bombing and a civilian population facing severe hardships
* Heavy bombing of the cities and the pressure of the evacuees from the east – left at least a quarter of the population homeless
* Transport systems had ceased to function, electricity and gas supplies had been cut, water and sewage systems were seriously damaged and epidemic diseases were beginning to appear – food supplies running low – risk of starvation in some areas
* Few signs of outwards resistance – German population reacted passively
* **April**– Berlin was captured by Soviet forces
* **8th May**– Germany conceded unconditional surrender to the Allies
* **May-** Hitler was dead – Germany had surrendered – the full horror of the camps was becoming apparent
* **1945** – women comprised 60% of the labour force
* **1945** – age for boys to be conscripted reduced to 16
* **1945** – by the end of the war, boys as young as 12 were being conscripted into the Volkssturm
* **1945** – Allied forces had entered Germany itself
* **January – May 1945** – bombing caused reduction in the amount of armaments produced
* **1936** – Germany had been preparing for war since the four-year plan
* **1936** – four-year plan in early stages concentrated on building up Germany’s productive potential – increasing iron and steel production – investing in machine tools – developing artificial alternatives to oil and rubber – once this productive potential had been expanded the full-scale production of armaments could begin – outbreak of war disrupted plans
* **1936** – Goering who was in charge of four-year plan lacked technical and economic knowledge – had poor relations with military leaders, leaders of large companies and banks – incapable of providing greater centralised coordination
* **1933** – since 1933 Dietrich Bonhoeffer who had been an outspoken critic of regime – protestant – called for wider Christian resistance to the treatment of Jews
* **1938** – among those who had been involved in the 1938 plot, General Beck, Karl Goerdeler and Ulrich von Hassell continued to discuss acting against the regime
* Beck and Goerdeler tried to persuade the senior army generals to arrest Hitler
* They also made contact with the British government hoping for commitment to a negotiated peace if Hitler was removed
* None of these moves was effective
* 1943 – conspirators decided that their only option was to assassinate Hitler
* The loss of the German army at Stalingrad confirmed that Hitler was leading Germany to disaster
* March 1943 – first assassination attempt was made – a bomb was placed on Hitler’s plane – this failed to explode
* Although the plot was not discovered, the arrest of Bonhoeffer and other members of the Kreisau circle in April 1943 was a warning that the gestapo was getting close to uncovering the full extent of the conspiracy
* 1943 – conspiracy was joined by Colonel von Stauffenberg, who succeeded in planting a bomb in Hitler’s headquarters in East Prussia in July 1944
* Plans were made for a military coup – codenamed operation Valkyrie – to take over Berlin after Hitler was assassinated
* If the assassination was successful the conspirators would have established a provisional government consisting of conservatives, centre party, SPD and non-party representatives – which would have then tried to open immediate peace negotiations with the western Allies
* The bomb exploded but Hitler escaped with minor injuries
* The planned coup did not materialise because of confusion among the conspirators, who failed to sieze control of the radio stations
* A broadcast by Hitler to prove he was still alive was confirmation that the plot had failed
* Himmler was in charge of rounding up conspirators
* The SS arrested 7000 people and executed 5746
* Beck committed suicide and Stauffenberg was shot
* Failure of the plot led to the army losing the last vestiges of its independence from the regime and was effectively placed under SS control
* Widespread feeling of relief that plotters that failed to kill Hitler