Total War Essay, Research Paper

By 1939 France and Great Britain had declared war on Germany. Germany had invaded Poland and was working towards European domination while on the other side of the globe Japan had launched a massive attack on China and Korea and was steadily moving over the Pacific in an attempt to gain complete control over Greater East Asia. Italy was attempting to conquer the Mediterranean and was, thus far, triumphant. All was being broadcast globally on the radio. This was becoming a war unlike any in the 20th century, even the First World War couldn?t compare to this gruesome fight against fascism, communism and world domination. For the first time ever there was a war on nearly every continent and ocean as well as every head and heart. This essay will examine how the media, economic and militaristic mobilization as well as the ideological opinions contribute to the view of the world being engrossed in what has now been called “the last noble war”.

This war characterized itself by the complete mobilization of man and his resources. Governments are soliciting the public for money: raising taxes, requesting the buying of war bonds, using every reserve they have including colonies, for soldiers and textiles, for example: coal, steel etc? Also there are strategic bombings of large cities, for the first time civilians fall victim, in great numbers, to the destruction of war. 50,000,000 people died in WWII, approximately 17,000,000 were civilians. With the help of the Nazis the term “genocide” was defined in this war. No genocidal attempt had ever achieved the same amount of success as Hitler?s racial cleansing. This along with Communist Russia only fueled the war time propaganda.

“Lebensraum”, “La Grande Croisade, L?ion des Volontaires Fran?is contre le Bolchevisme”, “Battle of Germany-Join an Air Crew”. All of these are slogans or captions of posters propagandizing the war effort on the home fronts. Radios all over the world were broadcasting speeches from world leaders encouraging everyone to do what they can in support of the war effort. Posters and flyers everywhere were distributing the country?s propaganda, urging the public to buy government war bonds and, at least in the US, requesting that women sacrifice their pantyhose to be used for gun powder sacks and other nylon materials. Because of the radio publicity the war is being broadcast into every home around the globe and the soldiers are no longer the only ones to be involved in the war.

The new weapons and machinery used in WWII attributed to the totality of the war. Mustard gas, war planes, tanks, submarines and the most notorious atomic bomb were all new weapons that aided in the devastation of the war. War planes bombed cities without the soldiers ever having to watch someone die, mustard gas burns soldiers and the tanks and submarines reek havoc in combat. The atomic bomb managed to kill 70,000 people when it hit Hiroshima and another 70,000 in the next 50 years with radiation. The new weaponry provided a dismal medium with which to slaughter the enemy, there was less contact and more damage than had ever been seen.

Lastly but not least there is the ideological aspect of the war. Hitler preaching nationalism and racial pride, Stalin preaching communism and freedom for the people, Mussolini preaching reform and power for Italy and the US and England fighting for democracy. This war was not just political, economical and territorial, it had a moral price tag on it. For the first time people weren?t just fighting for land and money, they were fighting for human rights and personal freedom, nationalism and political freedom. People were fighting for justice.

WWII was devastating: millions died, lives were ruined, and lives were saved. On every continent war was waging and the media was having a field day. Economically the whole world was involved in the war, even countries that weren?t fighting were profiting from the war. Territorially countries were fighting for land and utilizing all of their resources. Militaristically countries were racing to invent bigger better weapons and ideologically the world was divided by human rights issues and moral standards. The result is the most bloody destructive war the world has ever seen for the last worth while cause that war may ever know.

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