

**Source A: Len Jones recalls emerging from an air raid shelter in east London after the first night of the Blitz. ( in Juliet Gardiner, *The Blitz : the British under attack*, 2010)**

“Everything was blown to pieces, you could see it all by the red glow reflecting from the fires that were still raging. I looked out the back and saw that where my father’s shed had been was just a pile of rubble. Then I saw two bodies, two heads sticking up. I recognised one in particular: it was a Chinese neighbour, Mr Say.

He had one eye closed and I realised he was dead. I just convulsed, I was shaking all over. I thought, well, I must be dead because they were, so I struck match and tried to burn my finger. I kept doing it to see if I was still alive. I could see, but I thought, I cannot be alive. This is the end of the world. “

**Source B: London Air Raid Warden, speaking in January 1941.**

Down came the bombs. You could hear the planes going over the top with a low whistling sound. After a moment or two they started in with the incendiaries (bombs) and dropped a Molotov over the docks. There was fire in every direction. The City was turned into an enormous, **loosely-stacked** furnace, belching black smoke.

**loosely-stacked furnace: Une fournaise non-contrôlée**

**belch ( to) : jaillir**

**Source C: Chief inspector Percy Datlen, Dover ( 17<sup>th</sup> April ,1941)**

In cases where there are several houses bombed out in one street, **the looters** have systematically gone through the lot. Carpets have been stripped from the floors, stair carpets have been removed: they have even taken away heavy mangles, bedsteads and complete suites of furniture. We believe it is the greatest organized looting that has yet taken place and many front line citizens who have returned to their homes to carry on their essential jobs they are facing severe financial difficulties as the result of the work of the gang.

**Looters: pilleurs ; the loot = le butin**

**Source D: Article from History GCSE textbook 2010.**

The Blitz period saw the rise of professional criminals who would seek to profit from the bombing and blackout. Rationing, introduced for food and luxury goods, led to widespread abuse by people who would never be considered themselves lawbreakers. In 1943, in one operation, five million clothing coupons were stolen and the government had to cancel the entire issue. Morale was very low at times during the Blitz with some areas of Britain feeling surrender may be in the best interest of the country as it seemed inevitable that Britain would lose.

**Tasks:**

- Try to identify the source and the author of each document (a primary or secondary source)
- How did each author try to emphasize negative aspects of war time experiences (= to cast doubt on the story of war solidarity )

There is evidence to suggest that between 1940 and 1941 the People of Britain had what is known to be called the Blitz spirit.

However some argue that London could not take it: source B says "The City was turned into an enormous, loosely-stacked furnace, belching black smoke." Demonstrating the effects on the area.

The British historian Juliet Gardiner (*The Blitz : The British under Attack* , 2010) explained that "the Bomb-chasers" followed the latest raids so they could loot , while some people exploited the crisis for their own gain as selling places in the Tube to sleep at night. The Blitz itself provided a chance for opportunist thefts and the police had to set up an anti-looting squad to try to curb the problem

Strikes increased because working-class people suffered the most of the Blitz.

They lived near their work place, factories or docks, which were the first targets of the German Bombers (The East End).

According to Angus Calder (*The Myth of the Blitz*, 1991) during the Blitz crime rates increased 'by nearly sixty percent during the war (three times the rate of annual increase before the war)