

What the world's richest people did during World War II

ما فعله أغنى أثرياء العالم خلال الحرب العالمية الثانية

فرانسييس كاروثرز -

كيف أثر الصراع على أصحاب الثراء الفاحش؟

بعد ازدهار العشرينيات والانكماش الاقتصادي في الثلاثينيات ، أحدثت الحرب العالمية الثانية تغييرًا هائلًا في حياة فاحشي الثراء . بالنسبة للبعض ، كان هذا يعني السماح باستخدام منازلهم الفخمة في المجهود الحربي ، بينما بالنسبة للآخرين ، كان التخلي عن الإرث العائلي القِيم ثمنًا زهيدًا مقابل الأمان . انقر أو قم بالتمرير لمعرفة كيف عاش بعض أغنى أغنياء العالم بين عامي 1939 و 1945 .

ستغفر إذا اعتقدت أن أفراد العائلة المالكة البريطانيين عاشوا مثل الملوك أثناء الحرب . ربما عاش الملك جورج السادس ، الذي حكم بين عامي 1936-1952 ، بين قصر باكنغهام وقلعة وندسور - ومع ذلك كان عليه وعائلته تقنين كل شيء من الطعام إلى ماء الاستحمام . في الصورة هنا دوق ودوقة بوفورت (أقصى اليسار واليمين الوسطي) مع الأميرة إليزابيث (يسار الوسط) ، التي نعرفها الآن باسم الملكة إليزابيث الثانية ، وشقيقتها الأميرة مارغريت (أقصى اليمين) .

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How did the conflict affect the ultra-wealthy?



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After the prosperity of the 1920s and the economic downturn of the 1930s, World War II brought enormous change to the lives of the super-rich. For some, that meant allowing their stately homes to be used for the war effort, while for others giving up

valuable family heirlooms was a small price to pay for safety. Click or scroll through to find out how some of the world's richest people lived between 1939 and 1945.

The British royal family



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You'd be forgiven for thinking that the British royals lived like, well, royalty during the war. King George VI, who reigned between 1936–1952, may have lived between Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle – yet he and his family still had to ration everything from food to bath water. Pictured here are the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort (far left and centre right) with Princess Elizabeth (centre left), who we now know as Queen Elizabeth II, and her sister Princess Margaret (far right).

The British royal family



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The royals experienced the same dangers as the rest of the population. In fact, Buckingham Palace was bombed nine times during the war, and twice within three days in September 1940. During the second of these September attacks the King and Queen were actually in the Palace, but managed to escape unharmed. During the war years King George VI (pictured right) struck up a close – if unlikely – friendship with Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister. They got on so well that the weekly audience between King and Prime Minister soon became informal Tuesday lunches with no staff present. Although sometimes they were interrupted by air raids.

The British royal family



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Meanwhile, the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort had to give up most of their home to King George VI's mother, Queen Mary, who was the Duchess' aunt. She is pictured here in her youth in 1905. Allegedly, she arrived carrying more than 70 pieces of luggage and had 50 members of staff in tow, taking over all but two bedrooms and a sitting room, which were left for the Duke and Duchess.

The Mountbattens



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Louis and Edwina Mountbatten, the 1st Earl Mountbatten and Countess Mountbatten of Burma, were something of an 'It' couple before the war. Louis had royal lineage while Edwina had inherited a fortune when her grandfather Sir Ernest Joseph Cassel died in 1921 – a huge £2 million, equivalent to \$117 million (£96m) in today's money. Along with that, she received his townhouse, Brook House, and was a leading member of London society.

The Mountbattens



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But all that quickly changed with the outbreak of World War II. Louis went off to serve for the British Navy, becoming Supreme Allied Commander for the South East Asia Command from 1943 to 1946. Meanwhile, Edwina worked extensively in aid, serving with the St John Ambulance Brigade (pictured, seated on the far right) and later helping prisoners of war in southeast Asia.

### The Mountbattens

Edwina also had a bit of a reputation. She was known as one of the most beautiful women in the country and was unflatteringly described in her daughter's memoir as a "man eater". She had many affairs, the most famous of which was with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Edwina met him after the war when the couple moved to India in 1947 so that Louis could fulfill his role as the last Viceroy of India, helping to oversee India's transition to independence.

### The Astors



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Nancy and Waldorf Astor, both American expats living in the UK, got married in 1906. They were gifted the Astor family estate, Cliveden House in Buckinghamshire, which Waldorf's father William had bought in 1893 for \$1.2 million – equivalent to \$34 million (£28m) today. The 'Cliveden Set' was the name given to the social group that grew around them, with the house becoming something of a social hub where everyone from Charlie Chaplin to Mahatma Gandhi came to visit.

### The Astors



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Nancy Astor was Britain's first female MP to take her seat, serving in Parliament between 1919 and 1945. As a member of the Unionist Party (now the Conservative Party), she gained a reputation for being an outspoken rule-breaker. Both Nancy and Waldorf were against the war, and their Cliveden Set was known

for supporting appeasement with Hitler. This led them to often be accused of being fascists, although they denied this. Nancy changed her opinion on the war when the Germans invaded Prague, and despite their reservations they supported local people in her Plymouth constituency during bombings. Nancy stepped down from the Conservative Party in 1945, as a result of her increasingly erratic behaviour in Parliament.

The Astors



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As for Cliveden? At the outbreak of the war in September 1939, part of the enormous estate was rented out for a shilling a year to the Canadian Red Cross, who had also used it during World War I. The Canadian Red Cross Memorial Hospital was built on the estate's vast grounds, remaining open after the war under the newly-formed National Health Service (NHS).

Osman Ali Khan, Nizam of Hyderabad



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On the other side of the world, at the seat of the British Empire in India, the Nizam was living the high life. Osman Ali Khan ruled the southern Indian state of Hyderabad between 1911 and 1948, before it was taken over by India. His life was characterised by wealth and excess, with a personal net worth estimated at \$2 billion in the 1940s – equivalent to roughly \$34.9 billion (£28.6bn) today.

Osman Ali Khan, Nizam of Hyderabad



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The Nizam had the famous Golconda mines to thank for his affluence, which helped to make Hyderabad state the only global supplier of diamonds. His wealth was legendary: making an appearance on the cover of Time magazine in 1937, he was labelled the richest man in the world, and he owned an impressive diamond collection including the 185-carat Jacob Diamond, ranked as the fifth largest in the world. During World War II he provided military support to the Allies, lending naval ships and two Royal Air Force squadrons. When the war ended he was awarded the Royal Victorian Chain for his aid. He is pictured here bowing to King George V and Queen Mary in 1911 when they visited the Delhi Durbar, held to celebrate their coronation.

The Rockefellers



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As one of the wealthiest and most influential families in North America in the last 200 years, headed up by patriarch John D. Rockefeller I (pictured), the Rockefellers played an integral role in the war. They weren't keen on becoming involved in the European conflict initially, given that they had business dealings with German firms such as IG Farben and close ties with Britain and France. Yet they did want a war with Japan, one of their main rivals for oil and rubber resources in southeast Asia.

The Rockefellers



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Nelson A. Rockefeller, grandson of John D. Rockefeller I, was head of US activities in Latin America, helping to improve its relations with the West and counter the rising Nazi influence. David

Rockefeller, Nelson's younger brother, enlisted in the army in 1943, while also assisting with military intelligence in North Africa and France. Pictured is Nelson and David's eldest brother John D. Rockefeller III (left) at Claridge's in London in 1946, as he pledged to give away \$10 million to fund postwar Europe.

#### The Rockefellers



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The Rockefellers also had an interesting link with the UK wartime Prime Minister. Searching for a biographer to chronicle their family heritage in the 1930s, they approached Winston Churchill, who was well-known for his writing talent and penned 42 books in his lifetime. Yet Churchill's request of \$250,000 for the task – equivalent to around \$4.7 million (£3.8m) today – was too steep, so they ultimately got a Columbia University historian to do it instead.

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