

Employing the enemy:

German and Italian Prisoner of War labour was an important asset for the British economy, 1941-47

Labour contribution highest

- during the immediate post-war period

Economic asset:

- 400,000 German and 150,000 Italian POWs working in Britain at peak
- 10 % of British rural labour force in 1946
- More productive than previously assumed
- Crucial role for food production

Labour demand drove prisoner transfers in the British Commonwealth:



Financial break-even:

- Government revenue from employment substantially reduced maintenance costs
- initial liability turns into an asset
- Example: costs = revenue in Canada

