I

The Legacy of War

'This was no slow decadence that came to the Europeanised world-other civilizations rolled and crumbled down, the European civilization was, as it
were, blown up'. *KG. Wells, War in the Air (1908)*

'The human problem the war will leave behind it has not yet been imagined, much less faced by anybody. There has never been such destruction, such disintegration of the structure of life'.
Anne O'Hare McCormick

'Everywhere there is a craving for miracles and cures. The war has pushed the Neapolitans back into the Middle Ages'.
Norman Lewis, Naples '44

Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War offered a prospect of utter misery and desolation. Photographs and documentary films of the time show pitiful streams of helpless civilians trekking through a blasted landscape of broken cities and barren fields. Orphaned children wander forlornly past groups of worn out women picking over heaps of masonry. Shaven-headed deportees and concentration camp inmates in striped pyjamas stare listlessly at the camera, starving and diseased. Even the trams, propelled uncertainly along damaged tracks by intermittently available electric current, appear shell-shocked. Everyone and everything - with the notable exception of the well-fed Allied occupation forces - seems worn out, without resources, exhausted.

This image will need to be nuanced if we are to understand how that same shattered continent was able to recover so rapidly in years to come. But it conveys an essential truth about the European condition in the wake of Germany's defeat. Europeans *felt* hopeless, they *were* exhausted - and for good reason. The European war that began with Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939 and ended with Gery s unconditional surrender in May 1945 was a total war. It embraced civilians as well as soldiers. Indeed, in those countries occupied by Nazi Germany, from France to to Ukraine, from Norway

to Greece, World War Two was *primarily* a civilian experience. Formal military combat was confined to the beginning and end of the conflict. In between, this was a war of occupation, of repression, of exploitation and extermination, in which soldiers, storm-troopers and policemen disposed of the daily lives and very existence of tens of millions of imprisoned peoples. In some countries the occupation lasted most of the war; everywhere it brought fear and deprivation.

Unlike World War One, then, the Second War - Hitler's War - was a near universal experience. And it lasted a long time - nearly six years for those countries (Britain, Germany) that were engaged in it from beginning to end. In Czechoslovakia it began earlier still, with the Nazi occupation of the Sudetenland in October 1938. In eastern Europe and the Balkans it did not even end with the defeat of Hitler, since occupation (by the Soviet army) and civil war continued long after the dismemberment of Germany.

Wars of occupation were not unknown in Europe, of course. Far from it. Folk memories of the Thirty Years War in seventeenth-century Germany, during which foreign mercenary armies lived off the land and terrorized the local population, were still preserved three centuries later, in local myths and in fairy tales. Well into the nineteen-thirties Spanish grandmothers were chastening wayward children with the threat of Napoleon. But there was a peculiar intensity to the experience of occupation in World War Two. In part this was because of the distinctive Nazi attitude towards subject populations.

Previous occupying armies - the Swedes in seventeenth-century Germany, the Prussians in France after 1815 - lived off the land and assaulted and killed local civilians on an occasional and even random basis. But the peoples who fell under German rule after 1939 were either put to the service of the Reich or else were scheduled for destruction. For Europeans this was a new experience. Overseas, in their colonies, European states had habitually indentured or enslaved indigenous populations for their own benefit. They had not been above the use of torture, mutilation or mass murder to coerce their victims into obedience. But since the eighteenth century these practices were largely unknown among Europeans themselves, at least west of the Bug and Prut rivers. It was in the Second World War, then, that the full force of the modern European state was mobilized for the first time, for the primary purpose of conquering and exploiting other Europeans. In order to fight and win the war, the British exploited and ransacked their *own* resources: by the end of the war, Great Britain was spending more than half its Gross National Product on the war effort. Nazi Germany, however, fought the war - especially in its latter years - with significant help from the ransacked economies of its victims (much as Napoleon had done after 1805, but with incomparably greater efficiency). Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Bohemia-Moravia and, especially, France made significant involuntary contributions to the German war effort. Their mines, factories, farms and railways were directed to servicing German requirements and their populations were obliged to work at German war

production: at first in their own countries, later on in Germany itself. In September 1944 there were 7,487,000 foreigners in Germany, most of them there against their will, and they constituted 21 percent of the country's labour force.

The Nazis lived for as long as they could off the wealth of their victims - so successfully in fact that it was not until 1944 that German civilians themselves began to feel the impact of wartime restrictions and shortages. By then, however, the military conflict was closing in on them, first through Allied bombing campaigns, then with the simultaneous advance of Allied armies from east and west. And it was in this final year of the war, during the relatively brief period of active campaigning west of the Soviet Union, that much of the worst physical destruction took place.

From the point of view of contemporaries the war's impact was measured not in terms of industrial profit and loss, or the net value of national assets in 1945 when compared to 1938, but rather in the visible damage to their immediate environment and their communities. It is with these that we must begin if we are to understand the trauma that lay behind the images of desolation and hopelessness that caught the attention of observers in 1945.

Very few European towns and cities of any size had survived the war unscathed. By informal consent or good fortune the ancient and early-modern centers of a few celebrated European cities - Rome, Venice, Prague, Paris, Oxford - were never targeted. But in the first year of the war German bombers had flattened Rotterdam and gone on to destroy the industrial English city of Coventry. The Wehrmacht obliterated many smaller towns in their invasion routes through Poland and, later, Yugoslavia and the USSR. Whole districts of central London, notably in the poorer quarters around the docklands in the East End, had fallen victim to the Luftwaffe's *blitzkrieg* in the course of the war.

But the greatest material damage was done by the unprecedented bombing campaigns of the Western Allies in 1944 and 1945, and the relentless advance of the Red Army from Stalingrad to Prague. The French coastal towns of Royan, Le Havre and Caen were eviscerated by the US Air force. Hamburg, Cologne, Dusseldorf, Dresden and dozens of other German cities were laid waste by carpet-bombing from British and American planes. In the east, 80 percent of the Byelorussian city of Minsk was destroyed by the end of the war; Kiev in the Ukraine was a smouldering ruin; while the Polish capital Warsaw was systematically torched and dynamited, house by house, street by street, by the retreating German army in the autumn of 1944. When the war in Europe ended - when Berlin fell to the Red Army in May 1945 after taking 40,000 tons of shells in the final fourteen days - much of the German capital was reduced to smoking hillocks of rubble and twisted metal. Seventy-five percent of its buildings were uninhabitable. Ruined cities were the most obvious - and photogenic - evidence of the devastation, and they came to serve as a universal visual shorthand for the pity of war. Because much of the damage had been done to houses and apartment buildings, and so many people were homeless as a result (an estimated 25 million

people in the Soviet Union, a further 20 million in Germany - 500,000 of them in Hamburg alone) the rubble-strewn urban landscape was the most immediate reminder of the war that had just ended. But it was not the only one. In Western Europe transport and communications were seriously disrupted: of 12,000 railway locomotives in pre-war France, only 2,800 were in service by the time of the German surrender Many roads, rail tracks and bridges had been blown up - by the retreating Germans, the advancing Allies or the French Resistance. Two-thirds of the French merchant fleet had been sunk. In 1944-45 alone, France lost 500,000 dwellings.

But the French - like the British, the Belgians, the Dutch (who lost 219,000 hectares of land flooded by the Germans and were reduced by 1945 to 40 percent of their pre-war rail, road and canal transport), the Danes, the Norwegians (who had lost 14 percent of the country's pre-war capital in the course of the German occupation), and even the Italians - were comparatively fortunate, though they did not know it. The true horrors of war had been experienced further east. The Nazis treated western Europeans with some respect, if only the better to exploit them, and western Europeans returned the compliment by doing relatively little to disrupt or oppose the German war effort. In eastern and south-eastern Europe the occupying Germans were merciless, and not only because local partisans - in Greece, Yugoslavia and Ukraine especially - fought a relentless if hopeless battle against them.

The material consequences in the East of the German occupation, the Soviet advance and the partisan struggles were thus of an altogether different order from the experience of war in the West. In the Soviet Union, 70,000 villages and 1,700 towns were destroyed in the course of the war, along with 32,000 factories and 40,000 miles of rail track. In Greece, two-thirds of the country's vital merchant marine fleet was lost, one-third of its forests were ruined and a thousand villages were obliterated. Meanwhile the German policy of setting occupation-cost payments according to German military needs rather than the Greek capacity to pay generated hyperinflation. Yugoslavia lost 25 percent of its vineyards, 50 percent of all livestock, 60 percent the country's roads, 75 percent of all its ploughs and railway bridges, one in five pre-war dwellings and a third of its limited industrial wealth - along with 10 percent of its pre-war population. In Poland three-quarters of standard gauge rail tracks were unusable and one farm in six was out of operation. Most of the countryside towns and cities could barely function (though only Warsaw was totally destroyed). But even these figures, dramatic as they are, convey just a part of the picture: the grim physical background. Yet the material damage suffered by Europeans in the course of the war, terrible though it had been, was insignificant when set against the human losses. It is estimated that about thirty-six and a half million Europeans died between 1939 and 1945 from war-related causes (equivalent to the total population of France at the outbreak of war) - a number that does not include deaths from natural causes in those years, nor any estimate of the numbers of

children not conceived or born then or later because of the war.

The overall death toll is staggering (the figures given here do not include Japanese, US or other non-European dead). It dwarfs the mortality figures for the Great War of 1914-18, obscene as those were. No other conflict in recorded history killed so many people in so short a time. But what is most striking of all is the number of non-combatant civilians among the dead: at least 19 million, or more than half. The numbers of civilian dead exceeded military losses in the USSR, Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Norway. Only in the UK and Germany did military losses significantly outnumber civilian ones.

Estimates of civilian losses on the territory of the Soviet Union vary greatly, though the likeliest figure is in excess of 16 million people (roughly double the number of Soviet military losses, of whom 78,000 fell in the battle for Berlin alone). Civilian deaths on the territory of pre-war Poland approached 5 million; in Yugoslavia 1.4 million; in Greece 430,000; in France 350,000; in Hungary 270,000; in the Netherlands 204,000; in Romania 200,000. Among these, and especially prominent in the Polish, Dutch and Hungarian figures, were some 5.7 million Jews, to whom should be added 221,000 gypsies (Roma).

The causes of death among civilians included mass extermination, in death camps and killing fields from Odessa to the Baltic; disease, malnutrition and starvation (induced and otherwise); the shooting and burning of hostages - by the Wehrmacht, the Red Army and partisans of all kinds; reprisals against civilians; the effects of bombing, shelling and infantry battles in fields and cities, on the eastern Front throughout the war and in the West from the Normandy landings of June 1944 until the death of Hitler the following May; the deliberate strafing of refugee columns and the working to death of slave labourers in war industries and prison camps.

The greatest military losses were incurred by the Soviet Union, which is thought to have lost 8.6 million men and women under arms; Germany, with 4 million casualties; Italy, which lost 400,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen; and Romania, some 300,000 of whose military were killed, mostly fighting with the Axis armies on the   Russian front. In proportion to their populations, however, the Austrians, Hungarians, Albanians and Yugoslavs suffered the greatest military losses. Taking all deaths - civilian and military alike - into account, Poland, Yugoslavia, the USSR and Greece were the worst affected. Poland lost about one in five of her pre-war population, including a far higher percentage of the educated population, deliberately targeted for destruction by the Nazis (or by Stalin, who ordered the shooting of 23,000 Polish officers in Katyn forest in 1940 and then blamed it on the Germans).

 Yugoslavia lost one person in eight of the country's pre-war population, the USSR one in 11, Greece one in 14. To point j up the contrast, Germany suffered a rate of loss of 1/15; France 1/77; Britain 1/125.

The Soviet losses in particular include prisoners of war. The Germans captured 5.5 million Soviet soldiers in the course of the war, three quarters of them in the first seven months following the attack on the USSR in June 1941. Of these, 3.3 million died from starvation, exposure and mistreatment in German camps - more Russians died in German prisoner-of-war camps in the years 1941-45 than in all of World War One. Of the 750,000 Soviet soldiers captured when the Germans took Kiev in September 1941, just 22,000 lived to see Germany defeated. The Soviets in their turn took 3.5 million prisoners of war (German, Austrian, Romanian and Hungarian for the most part); most of them returned home after the war.

In view of these figures, it is hardly surprising that post-war Europe, especially central and eastern Europe, suffered an acute shortage of men. In the Soviet Union the number of women exceeded men by 20 million, an imbalance that would take more than a generation to correct. The Soviet rural economy now depended heavily on women for labour of every kind: not only were there no men, there were almost no horses. In Yugoslavia - thanks to German reprisal actions in which all males over 15 were shot - there were many villages with no adult men left at all. In Germany itself, two out of every three men born in 1918 did not survive Hitler's war: in one community for which we have detailed figures - the Berlin suburb of Treptow - in February 1946, among adults aged 19-21 there were just 181 men for 1,105 women.

Much has been made of this over-representation of women in post-war Germany especially. The humiliated, diminished status of German males - reduced from the supermen of Hitler's burnished armies to a ragged troupe of belatedly returning prisoners, bemusedly encountering a generation of hardened women who had perforce learned to survive and manage without them - is not a fiction (the German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder is just one of many thousands of German children who grew up after the war without fathers). Rainer Fassbinder put this image of post-war German womanhood to effective cinematic use in the *Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979), where the eponymous heroine turns her good looks and her cynical energies to advantage, despite her mother's entreaties to do nothing 'that might harm your soul'. But whereas Fassbinder's Maria carried the burden of a later generation's resentful disillusion, the real women of 1945 Germany faced more immediate difficulties. In the final months of the war, as the Soviet armies pushed west into central Europe and eastern Prussia, millions of civilians - most of them German - fled before thern. George Kennan, the American diplomat, described the scene in his memoirs: 'The disaster that befell this area with the entry of the Soviet forces has has no parallel in modern European experience. There were considerable sections of it where, to judge by all existing evidicence, scarcely a man, woman or child of the indigenous population was left alive after the initial passage of Soviet forces...the Russians...swept native population clean in a manner that had no parallel since the

days of the Asiatic hordes. Chief among the victims were adult males (if any remained) and women of any age. 87,000 women in Vienna were reported by clinics and doctors to have been raped by Soviet soldiers in the three weeks following the Red Army's arrival in the city. A slightly larger number of women in Berlin were raped in the Soviet march on the city, most of them in the week of May 2nd-7th, immediately preceding the German surrender. Both of these figures are surely an underestimate, and they do not include the uncounted number of assaults on women in the villages and towns that lay in the path of the Soviet forces in their advance into Austria and across western Poland into Germany.

The behaviour of the Red Army was hardly a secret. Milovan Djilas, Tito's close collaborator in the Yugoslav partisan army and at the time a fervent Communist, even raised the matter with Stalin himself. The dictator's response, as recorded by Djilas, is revealing: 'Does Djilas, who is himself a writer, know what human suffering and the human heart are? Can't he understand the soldier who has gone through blood and fire and death, if he has fun with a woman or takes a trifle?'

In his grotesque way, Stalin was half right. There was no leave policy in the Soviet army. Many of its infantry and tank crews had fought their way back for three terrible years in an unbroken series of battles and marches across the western USSR, through Russia and Ukraine. In the course of their advance they saw and heard copious evidence of German atrocities. The Wehrmacht's treatment of war prisoners, of civilians, of partisans and indeed of anyone or anything that got in its way,] first in its proud advance to the Volga and the gates of Moscow and Leningrad, then in its bitter, bloody retreat, had left its mark on the face of the land and in the soul I of the people.

When the Red Army finally reached central Europe, its exhausted soldiers en-countered another world. The contrast between Russia and the West was always great - Czar Alexander I had long ago regretted allowing Russians to see how Westerners lived - and it had grown even sharper during the war. While German soldiers wreaked devastation and mass murder in the East, Germany itself remained prosperous - so much so that its civilian population had very little sense of the material cost of war until quite late in the conflict. Wartime Germany was a world of towns, of electricity, of food and clothing and shops and consumer goods, of reasonably well-fed women and children. The contrast with his own devastated homeland must have seemed unfathomable to the common Soviet soldier. The Germans I had done terrible things to Russia; now it was their turn to suffer. Their possessions and their women were there for the taking. With the tacit consent of its commanders, the Red Army was turned loose on the civilian population of the newly conquered German lands.

On its route west the Red Army raped and pillaged (the phrase, for once, is brutally apt) in Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Yugoslavia; but German women suffered by far the worst. Between 150,000 and 200,000 'Russian babies' were born in the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany in 1945-46, and these figures make no allowance for untold numbers of abortions, as a result of which many women died with their unwanted foetuses. Many of the surviving infants joined the growing number of children now orphaned and homeless: the human flotsam of war. In Berlin alone, there were some 53,000 lost children by the end of 1945. The Quirinale gardens in Rome became briefly notorious as a gathering place for thousands of Italy´s mutilated, disfigured and unclaimed children. In liberated Czechoslovakia there were 49,000 orphaned children; in the Netherlands, 60,000; in Poland it was estimated that there were about 200,000 orphans, in Yugoslavia perhaps 300,000. Few of the younger children were Jewish - such Jewish children as survived the pogroms and exterminations of the war years were mostly adolescent boys. In Buchenwald, 800 children were found alive at the liberation of the camp; in Belsen just 500, some of whom had even survived the death march from Auschwitz.

Surviving the war was one thing, surviving the peace another. Thanks to early and effective intervention by the newly formed United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and the occupying allied armies, large-scale epidemics and the uncontrolled spread of contagious diseases were avoided - the memory of the Asian 'flu that swept through Europe in the wake of the First World War was still fresh. But the situation was grim enough. For much of 1945 the population of Vienna subsisted on a ration of 800 calories per day; in Budapest in December 1945 the officially provided ration was just 556 calories per day (children in nurseries received 800). During the Dutch 'hunger winter' of 1944-45 (when parts of the country had already been liberated) the *weekly* calorie ration in some regions fell below the *daily* allocation recommended by the Allied Expeditionary Force for its soldiers; 16,000 Dutch citizens died, mostly old people and children.

In Germany, where the average adult intake had been 2,445 calories per day in 1940-41 and was 2,078 calories per day in 1943, it had fallen to 1,412 calories for the year 1945-46. But this was just an average. In June 1945, in the American Zone of occupation, the official daily ration for 'normal' German consumers (excluding favoured categories of worker) stood at just 860 calories. These figures gave rueful significance to the wartime German joke: 'Better enjoy the war - the peace will be terrible.' But the situation was not much better in most of Italy and somewhat worse in some districts of Yugoslavia and Greece. The problem lay partly in destroyed farms, partly in disrupted communications and mostly in the sheer numbers of helpless, unproductive mouths

needing to be fed. Where Europe's farmers *could* grow food they were reluctant to supply it to towns. Most European currencies were worthless; and even if there had been therewithal to pay peasants for their food in some hard currency, the latter held little attraction for them - there was nothing to buy. So food did appear on the black market, but at prices that only criminals, the rich and the occupiers could pay.

In the meantime, people starved and they fell sick. One third of the population of Piraeus, in Greece, suffered from trachoma in 1945 due to acute vitamin deficiency. During an outbreak of dysentery in Berlin during July 1945 - the result of damaged sewage systems and polluted water supplies - there were 66 infant deaths for every 100 live births. Robert Murphy, the US political adviser for Germany, reported in October 1945 that an average of ten people daily were dying at the Lehrter railway station in Berlin from exhaustion, malnutrition and illness. In the British Zone of Berlin, in December 1945, the death rate of children under one year was one in four, while during that same month there were 1,023 new cases of typhoid and 2,193 cases of diphtheria.

For many weeks after the end of the war, in the summer of 1945, there was a serious risk, in Berlin especially, of disease from rotting corpses. In Warsaw, one person in five suffered from tuberculosis. The Czechoslovak authorities in January 1946 reported that half of the 700,000 needy children in the country were infected with the disease. Children all over Europe were suffering from sicknesses of deprivation: tuberculosis and rickets especially, but also pellagra, dysentery and impetigo. Sick children had little recourse: for the 90,000 children of liberated Warsaw there was just one hospital, with fifty beds. Otherwise healthy children died from a shortage of milk (millions of head of European cattle were slaughtered in the battles across southern and eastern Europe in 1944-45) and most were chronically undernourished. Infant mortality in Vienna during the summer of 1945 was nearly four times the rate in 1938. Even in the relatively prosperous streets of western cities children went hungry and food was strictly rationed.

The problem of feeding, housing, clothing and caring for Europe's battered civilians (and the millions of imprisoned soldiers of the former Axis powers) was complicated and magnified by the unique scale of the refugee crisis. This was something new in the European experience. All wars dislocate the lives of non-combatants: by destroying their land and their homes, by disrupting communications, by enlisting and killing husbands, fathers, sons. But in World War Two it was state policies rather than armed conflict that did the worst damage.

Stalin had continued his pre-war practice of transferring whole peoples across the Soviet empire. Well over a million people were deported east from Soviet- I occupied Poland and the western Ukraine and Baltic lands between 1939-41. In the same years the

Nazis too expelled 750,000 Polish peasants eastwards from western Poland, offering the vacated land to *Volksdeutsche,* ethnic Germans from occupied eastern Europe who were invited to 'come home' to the newly-expanded Reich. This offer attracted some 120,000 Baltic Germans, a further 136,000 from Soviet-occupied Poland, 200,000 from Romania and others besides-all of whom would in their turn be expelled a few years later. Hitler's policy of racial transfers and genocide in Germany's conquered eastern lands must thus be understood in direct relation to the Nazis' project of returning to the Reich (and settling in the newly-cleared property of their victims) all the far-flung settlements of Germans dating back to medieval times. The Germans removed Slavs, exterminated Jews and imported slave workers from west and east alike.

Between them Stalin and Hitler uprooted, transplanted, expelled, deported and dispersedd some 30 million people in the years 1939-43. With the retreat of the Axis armies the process was reversed. Newly-resettled Germans joined millions of es-tablished German communities throughout eastern Europe in headlong flight from the Red Army. Those who made it safely into Germany were joined there by a pullulating throng of other displaced persons. William Byford-Jones, an officer with the British army, described the situation in 1945 thus:

'Flotsam and jetsam! Women who had lost husbands and children, men who had lost their wives; men and women who had lost their homes and children; families who had lost vast farms and estates, shops, distilleries, factories, flour-mills, mansions. There were also little children who were alone, carrying some small bundle, with a pathetic label attached to them. They had somehow got detached from their mothers, or their mothers had died and been buried by other displaced persons somewhere along the wayside.'

From the east came Balts, Poles, Ukrainians, Cossacks, Hungarians, Romanians and others: some were just fleeing the horrors of war, others escaping West to avoid being caught under Communist rule. A *New York Times* reporter described a column of 24,000 Cossack soldiers and families moving through southern Austria, 'no different in any major detail from what an artist might have painted in the Napoleonic wars'. From the Balkans came not just ethnic Germans but more than 100,000 Croats from the fallen wartime fascist regime of Ante Pavelic, fleeing the wrath of Tito's partisans. In Germany and Austria, in addition to the millions of Wehrmacht soldiers held by the Allies and newly released Allied soldiers from German POW camps, there were many non-Germans who had fought against the Allies alongside the Germans or under German command: the Russian, Ukrainian and other soldiers of General Andrei Vlasov's anti-Soviet army; volunteers for the *Waffen SS* from Norway, the Netherlands,

Belgium and France; and auxiliary German fighters, concentration camp staff and others liberally recruited in Latvia, Ukraine, Croatia and elsewhere. All had good reason to seek refuge from Soviet retribution. Then there were the newly-released men and women who had been recruited by the Nazis to work in Germany. Brought into German farms and factories from all across the continent, they numbered many millions, spread across Germany proper and its annexed territories, constituting the largest single group of Nazi-displaced persons in 1945. Involuntary *economic* migration was thus the primary social experience of World War Two for many European civilians, including 280,000 Italians forcibly removed to Germany by their former ally after Italy's capitulation to the Allies in September 1943.

Most of Germany's foreign workers had been brought there against their will - but not all. Some foreign workers caught in the slipstream of German defeat in May 1945 had come of their own free will - like those unemployed Dutchmen who accepted offers of work in Nazi Germany before 1939 and stayed on.[4] Even at the derisory wages paid by wartime German employers, men and women from eastern Europe, the Balkans, France and the Benelux countries were often better off there than staying at home. And Soviet labourers (of whom there were upwards of two million in Germany by September 1944), even if they had been brought to Germany by force, were not necessarily sorry to be there - as one of them, Elena Skrjabena, recalled after the war: 'None of them complain about how the Germans had sent them to work in German industry. For all of them that was the only possibility of getting out of the Soviet Union.'

Another group of displaced persons, the survivors of the concentration camps, felt rather differently. Their 'crimes' had been various - political or religious opposition to Nazism or Fascism, armed resistance, collective punishment for attacks on Wehrmacht soldiers or installations, minor transgressions of Occupation regulations, real or invented criminal activities, falling foul of Nazi racial laws. They survived camps which by the end were piled high with dead bodies and where diseases of every kind were endemic: dysentery, TB, diphtheria, typhoid, typhus, broncho-pneumonia, gastro-enteritis, gangrene and much else. But even these survivors were better off than the Jews, since they had not been systematically and collectively scheduled for extermination.

Few Jews remained. Of those who were liberated 4 out of 10 died within a few weeks of the arrival of Allied armies - their condition was beyond the experience of Western medicine. But the surviving Jews, like most of Europe's other homeless millions, found their way into Germany. Germany was where the Allied agencies and camps were to be situated - and anyway, eastern Europe was still not safe for Jews.

After a series of post-war pogroms in Poland many of the surviving Jews left for good: 63,387 Jews arrived in Germany from Poland just between July and September 1946. What was taking place in 1945, and had been underway for at least a year, was thus an unprecedented exercise in ethnic cleansing and population transfer. In part this was the outcome of 'voluntary' ethnic separation: Jewish survivors leaving a Poland where they were unsafe and unwanted, for example, or Italians departing the Istrian peninsula rather than live under Yugoslav rule. Many ethnic minorities who had collaborated with occupying forces (Italians in Yugoslavia, Hungaians in Hungarian-occupied northern Transylvania now returned to Romanian rule, Ukrainians in the western Societ Union, etc) fled with the retreating Wehrmacht to ovoid retribution from the local majority or the advancing Red Army, and never returned. Their departure may not have been legally mandated or enforced by local authorities, but they had little option. Elsewhere, however, official policy was at work well before the war ended. The Germans of course began this, with the removal and genocide of the Jews, and the mass expulsions of Poles and other Slav nations. Under German aegis between 1939 and 1943 Romanians and Hungarians shunted back and forth across new frontier lines in disputed Transylvania. The Soviet authorities in their turn engineered a series of forced population exchanges between Ukraine and Poland; one million Poles fled or were expelled from their homes in what was now western Ukraine, while half a million Ukrainians left Poland for the Soviet Union between October 1944 and June 1946. In the course of a few months what had once been an intermixed region of different faiths, languages and communities became two distinct, monoethnic territories.

Bulgaria transferred 160,000 Turks to Turkey; Czechoslovakia, under a February 1946 agreement with Hungary, exchanged the 120,000 Slovaks living in Hungary for an equivalent number of Hungarians from communities north of the Danube, in Slovakia. Other transfers of this kind took place between Poland and Lithuania and between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union; 400,000 people from southern Yugoslavia were moved to land in the north to take the place of 600,000 departed Germans and Italians. Here as elsewhere, the populations concerned were not consulted. But the largest affected group was the Germans. The Germans of eastern Europe would probably have fled west in any case: by 1945 they were not wanted in the countries where their families had been settled for many hundreds of years. Between a genuine popular desire to punish local Germans for the ravages of war and occupation, and the exploitation of this mood by post-war governments, the German-speaking communities of Yugoslavia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Baltic region and the western Soviet Union were doomed and they knew it.

In the ebeny, they were given no choice. As early as 1942 the British had privately acceded to Czech requests for a post-war removal of he Sudeten German population, and the Russians and Americans fell into line the following year. On May 19 1945, President Eduard Beneš of Czechoslovakia decreed that ´we have decided to eliminace the German problem in our republic once and for all.´ In a speech in Bratislava on May 9 1945, Beneš declared that Czechs and Slovaks no longer wished to live in the same state as Hungarians and Germans. This sentiment, and the actions that followed, has haunted Czech-German and Slovak-Hungarian relations ever since. Germans (as well as Hungarians and other 'traitors') were to have their property placed under state control. In June 1945 their land was expropriated and on August 2nd of that year they lost their Czechoslovak citizenship. Nearly three million Germans, most of them from the Czech Sudetenland, were then expelled into Germany in the course of the following eighteen months. Approximately 267,000 died in the course of the expulsions. Whereas Germans had comprised 29 percent of the population of Bohemia and Moravia in 1930, by the census of 1950 they were just 1.8 percent.

From Hungary a further 623,000 Germans were expelled, from Romania 786,000, from Yugoslavia about half a million and from Poland 1.3 million. But by far the greatest number of German refugees came from the former eastern lands of Germany itself: Silesia, East Prussia, eastern Pomerania and eastern Brandenburg. At the Potsdam meeting of the US, Britain and the USSR (July i7th-August 2nd 1945) it was agreed, in the words of Article XIII of the subsequent agreement, that the three governments 'recognize that the transfer to Germany of German populations, or elements thereof, remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, will have to be undertaken.' In part this merely recognized what had already taken place, but it also represented a formal acknowledgement of the implications of shifting Poland's frontiers westwards. Some seven million Germans would now find themselves in Poland, and the Polish authorities (and the occupying Soviet forces) wanted them removed - in part so that Poles and others who lost land in the eastern regions now absorbed into the USSR could in their turn be resettled in the new lands to the west.

The upshot was *de jure* recognition of a new reality. Eastern Europe had been forcibly cleared of its German populations: as Stalin had promised in September 1941, he had returned 'East Prussia back to Slavdom, where it belongs.' In the Potsdam Declaration it was agreed 'that any transfers that take place should be effected in an orderly and humane manner', but under the circumstances this was hardly likely. Some Western observers were shocked at the treatment of the German communities. Anne O'Hare McCormick, a *New York Times* correspondent, recorded her

impressions on October 23rd 1946: 'The scale of this resettlement, and the conditions in which it takes place, are without precedent in history. No one seeing its horrors first hand can doubt that it is a crime against humanity for which history will exact a terrible retribution.'

History has exacted no such retribution. Indeed, the 13 million expellees were settled and integrated into West German society with remarkable success, though memories remain and in Bavaria (where many of them went) the subject can still provoke intense feeling. To contemporary ears it is perhaps a little jarring to hear the German expulsions described as a 'crime against humanity' a few months after the revelation of crimes on an altogether different scale committed in the name of those same Germans. But then the Germans were alive and present, whereas their victims - Jews above all - were mostly dead and gone. In the words of Telford Taylor, the US prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials of the Nazi leadership, writing many decades later:

'There was a crucial difference between the post-war expulsions and the war time population clearances, 'when the expellers accompany the expelled to ensure that they are kept in ghettos and then either kill them or use them as forced labor.'

At the conclusion of the First World War it was borders that were invented and adjusted while people were on the whole left in place.(with the significant exception of Greeks and Turks, following the Lausanne Treaty of 1923) After 1945 what happened was rather the opposite: with one major exception boundaries stayed broadly intact and people were moved instead. There was a feeling among Western policymakers that the League of Nations, and the minority clauses in the Versailles Treaties, had failed and that it would be a mistake even to try and resurrect them. For this reason they acquiesced readily enough in the population transfers. If the surviving minorities of central and eastern Europe could not be afforded effective international protection, then it was as well that they be dispatched to more accommodating locations. The term 'ethnic cleansing' did not yet exist, but the reality surely did - and it was far from arousing wholesale disapproval or embarrassment.

The exception, as so often, was Poland. The geographical re-arrangement of Poland - losing 69,000 square miles of its eastern borderlands to the Soviet Union and being compensated with 40,000 square miles of rather better land from German territories east of the Oder-Neisse rivers - was dramatic and consequential for Poles, Ukrainians and Germans in the affected lands. But in the circumstances of 1945 it was unusual, and should rather be understood as part of the general territorial adjustment that Stalin imposed all along the western rim of his empire: recovering Bessarabia from Romania, seizing the Bukovina and Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia from Romania and Czechoslovakia respectively, absorbing the Baltic states into the Soviet

Union and retaining the Karelian peninsula, seized from Finland during the war.

West of the new Soviet frontiers there was little change. Bulgaria recovered a sliver of land from Romania in the Dobrudja region; the Czechoslovaks obtained from Hungary (a defeated Axis power and thus unable to object) three villages on the right bank of the Danube opposite Bratislava; Tito was able to hold on to part the formerly Italian territory around Trieste and in Venezia Giulia that his forces ccupied at the end of the war. Otherwise land seized by force between 1938 and 1945 was returned and the *status quo ante* restored.

With certain exceptions, the outcome was a Europe of nation states more ethnically homogenous than ever before. The Soviet Union of course remained a multi-national empire. Yugoslavia lost none of its ethnic complexity, despite bloody inter-communal fighting during the war. Romania still had a sizeable Hungarian minority in Transylvania and uncounted numbers - millions - of gypsies. But Poland, whose population was just 68 percent Polish in 1938, was overwhelmingly populated by Poles in 1946. Germany was nearly all German (not counting tern-porary refugees and displaced persons); Czechoslovakia, whose population before Munich was 22 percent German, 5 percent Hungarian, 3 percent Carpathian, Ukrainians and 1.5 percent Jewish, was now almost exclusively Czech and Slovak: of the 55,000 Czechoslovak Jews who survived the war, all but 16,000 would leave by 1950. The ancient diasporas of Europe - Greeks and Turks in the south Balkans and around the Black Sea, Italians in Dalmatia, Hungarians in Transylvania and the north Balkans, Poles in Volhynia (Ukraine), Lithuania and the Bukovina, Germans from the Baltic to the Black Sea, from the Rhine to the Volga, and Jews everywhere - shriveled and disappeared. A new, 'tidier' Europe was being born.

Most of the initial management of the displaced persons and refugees - gathering them up, establishing camps for them and providing food, clothing and medical help was undertaken by the Allied armies occupying Germany, the US Army especially. There was no other authority in Germany but also in Austria and in northern Italy, the other areas in which refugees congregated. Only the army had the resources and the organizational capacity to administer the demographic equivalent of a mediumsized country. This was an unprecedented charge for a huge military machine that, just a few weeks before, had been devoted almost exclusively to the business of fighting the Wehrmacht. As General Dwight D. Eisenhower (the Supreme Allied Commander) expressed it, reporting to President Harry Truman on October 8th 1945 in response to criticisms directed at the military's handling of refugees and concentration camp survivors: 'In certain instances we have fallen below standard, but I should like to point out that a whole army has been faced with the intricate problem of adjusting from combat to mass repatriation and then to the present static phase with its unique welfare problems.'

Once the system of camps had been set in place, however, responsibility for the care and eventual repatriation or resettlement of the displaced millions fell increasingly on the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. UNRRA was founded in November 9th 1943 at a Washington meeting of representatives from 44 future UN members, held in anticipation of likely post-war needs, and went on to play a vital role in the post-war emergency. The agency spent $10 billion between July 1945 and June 1947, almost all of it furnished by the governments of the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom. A lot of that aid went directly to former allies in eastern Europe - Poland, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia - and to the Soviet Union, as well as to the administration of dis placed persons in Germany and elsewhere. Of the former Axis countries only Hungary received UNRRA assistance, and not very much at that.

In late 1945 UNRRA was operating 227 camps and relief centers for displaced persons and refugees in Germany, with a further 25 in neighbouring Austria and a handful in France and the Benelux countries. By June 1947 it had 762 such units in Western urope, the overwhelming majority in the Western Zones of Germany. At its peak in September 1945, the number of liberated United Nations civilians (i.e. not including citizens of former Axis countries) being cared for or repatriated by UNRRA and other Allied agencies was 6,795,000 - to whom should be added a further 7 million under Soviet authority and many millions of displaced Germans. In nationality the largest groups were from the Soviet Union: released prisoners and former forced labourers. Then came 2 million French (prisoners of war, labourers and deportees), 1.6 million Poles, 700,000 Italians, 350,000 Czechs, more than 300,000 Dutch, 300,000 Belgians and countless others.

UNRRA food supplies played a vital part in feeding Yugoslavia especially: with-out the agency's contributions, many more people would have died in the years 1945-47. In Poland UNRRA helped maintain food consumption at 60 percent of pre-war levels, in Czechoslovakia at 80 percent. In Germany and Austria it shared responsibility for handling displaced persons and refugees with the International Refugee Organisation (IRO), whose statutes were approved by the General Assembly of the UN in December 1946.

The IRO, too, was largely funded from the Western allied powers. In its first (1947) budget the United States' share was 46 percent, rising to 60 percent by 1949; the United Kingdom contributed 15 percent, France 4 percent. Because of disagreement between the Western allies and the Soviet Union over the issue of forced repatriations, the IRO

was always regarded by the USSR (and later by the Soviet bloc) as a purely Western instrument and its services were thus confined to refugees in areas controlled by Western armies of occupation. Moreover, since it was devoted to servicing the needs of refugees, German displaced persons were also debarred from its benefits.

This distinction between displaced persons (assumed to have, somewhere, a home to go to) and refugees (who were classified as homeless) was just one of many nuances that were introduced in these years. People were treated differently depending on whether they were nationals of a wartime ally (Czechoslovakia, Holand, Belgium, etc) or a former enemy state (Germany, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, etc). This distinction was also invoked when establishing priorities for the repatriation of refugees. The first to be processed and sent home were UN nationals liberated from concentration camps; then came UN nationals who had been prisoners of war, followed by UN nationals who were displaced persons (formel forced labourers in many cases), then displaced persons from Italy and finally the nationals of former enemy states. Germans were to be left in place and absorbed locally. Returning French, Belgian, Dutch, British or Italian citizens to their country of origin was relatively straightforward and the only impediments were logistic: determining who had a right to go where and finding enough trains to take them there.By June 18th 1945, all but 40,550 of the 1.2 million French nationals found in Germany at the surrender a month earlier were back in France. Italians had to wait longer, as former enemy nationals and because the Italian government had no co-ordinated plan to repatriate its citizens. But even they were all home by 1947. In the east, however, there were two significant complications. Some displaced persons from eastern Europe were technically stateless and had no country to which to re turn. And many of them had no wish to go home. This puzzled Western adminis-trators at first. Under an agreement signed at Halle, in Germany, in May 1945 all former prisoners of war and other citizens of the Soviet Union were to return home, and it was assumed that they would wish to do so. There was one exception: the western Allies did not recognize Stalin's wartime absorption of the Baltic states into the USSR and Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians in displaced persons camps in the western zones of Germany and Austria were therefore to be given the option of returning east or finding new homes in the West.

But it was not just the Baits who did not wish to go back. A large number of for mer Soviet, Polish, Romanian and Yugoslav citizens also preferred to remain in tem porary camps in Germany rather than return to their countries. In the case of Soviet citizens this reluctance often arose from a well-founded fear of reprisals against anyone who had spent time in the West, even if that time had been passed in a prison camp. In the case of Balts, Ukrainians, Croats and others there was a reluctance to return to countries now under Communist control in fact if not yet in name: in many cases this reluctance was prompted by fear of retribution for real or imputed war crimes, but it was also driven by a simple desire to escape west into a better life.

Throughout 1945 and 1946 Western authorities preferred to ignore such feelings on the whole and oblige Soviet and other east European citizens to return home, sometimes by force. With Soviet officials actively rounding up their own people from German camps, refugees from the East sought desperately to convince be mused French, American or British officials that they did not want to return 'home' and would rather stay in Germany - of all places. They were not always success ful: between 1945 and 1947, 2,272,000 Soviet citizens were returned by the Western Allies.

There were terrible scenes of desperate struggle, particularly in the early post-war months, as Russian emigres who had never been Soviet citizens, Ukrainian partisans and many others were rounded up by British or American troops and pushed - sometimes literally - across the border into the arms of the waiting NKVD. Once in Soviet hands they joined hundreds of thousands of other repatriated Soviet nationals, as well as Hungarians, Germans and other former enemies deported east by the Red Army. By 1953 a total of five and a half million Soviet nationals had been repatriated. One in five of them ended up shot or dispatched to the Gulag. Many more were sent directly into Siberian exile or else assigned to labour battalions.

Only in 1947 did forced repatriation cease, with the onset of the Cold War and a new willigness to treat displaced persons from the Soviet bloc as *political* refugees (the 50,000 Czech nationals still in Germany and Austria at the time of the February 1948 Communist coup in Prague were immediately accorded this status). A total of one and a half million Poles, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Romanians, Yugoslavs, Soviet nationals and Jews thus successfully resisted repatriation. Together with Balts h se formed the overwhelming majority of displaced persons left in the western zones of Germany and Austria, and in Italy. In 1951 the European Convention on Human Rights would codify the protection to which such displaced aliens were entitled, and finally guarantee them against forcible return to persecution.

The question remained, however: what was to become of them? The refugees and DPs themselves were in no doubt. In the words of Genet (Janet Flanner), writing in *The New Yorker* in October 1948, '[The displaced persons] are willing to go anywhere on earth except home.' But who would take them? West European states, short of labour and in the midst of economic and material reconstruction, were initially quite open to importing certain categories of stateless person. Belgium, France and Britain especially needed coalminers, construction workers and agricultural labourers. In 1946-47 Belgium took in 22,000 displaced persons (along with their families) to work in the mines of Wallonia. France took in 38,000 people for manual employment of various kinds. Britain took 86,000 persons in this way, including many veterans of the Polish army and Ukrainians who had fought in the *Waffen SS* 'Halychnya' Division (the division of the Waffen SS was made up of Ukrainians who had been citizens of inter-war Poland and whose region of origin was incorporated ito the USSR after the war. They were thus not repatriated to the Soviet Union, despitehaving fought against it alongside the Wehrmacht, whose region of origin was incorporated into the USSR after the war. They were thus not repatriatd to the Soviet Union, despite having fought against it alongside the Wehrmacht, and were treated by Western authorities

as stateless persons).

The criteria for admission were simple - western European states were interested in strong (male) manual workers, and were not embarrassed to favour Baits, Poles and Ukrainians on those grounds, whatever their wartime record. Single women were welcome as manual workers or domestics - but the Canadian Labor Department in 1948 rejected girls and women applying to emigrate to Canada for jobs in domestic service if there was any sign that they had education beyond secondary school. And no-one wanted older people, orphans or single women with children. Refugees in general, then, were not met with open arms - post-war polls in the US western Europe revealed very little sympathy for their plight. Most people expressed a desire to see immigration reduced rather than increased.

The problem of the Jews was distinctive. At first the Western authorities treated Jewish DPs like any other, corralling them in camps in Germany alongside many of their former persecutors. But in August 1945 President Truman announced that separate facilities should be provided for all Jewish DPs in the American Zone of Germany: in the words of a report the President had commissioned to look into the problem, the previously integrated camps and centers were 'a distinctly unrealistic approach to the problem. Refusal to recognize the Jews as such has the effect ... of closing one's eyes to their former and more barbaric persecution.' By the end of September 1945, all Jews in the US Zone were being cared for separately.

There had never been any question of returning Jews to the east-no-one in the Soviet Union, Poland or anywhere else evinced the slightest interest in having them back. Nor were Jews particularly welcome in the west, especially if educated or qualified in non-manual professions. And so they remained, ironically enough, in Germany. The difficulty of 'placing' the Jews of Europe was only solved by the creation of the state of Israel: between 1948 and 1951 332,000 European Jews left for Israel, either from IRO centers in Germany or else directly from Romania, Poland and elsewhere, in the case of those still left in these countries. A further 165,000 eventually left for France, Britain, Australia and North or South America.

There they would be joined by the remaining displaced persons and refugees from World War Two, to whom should be added a new generation of political refugees from east-central European countries in the years 1947-49. Overall the US admitted 400,000 people in these years, with another 185,000 arriving in the course of the years 1953-57. Canada allowed in a total of 157,000 refugees and DPs, Australia took 182,000 (among them 60,000 Poles and 36,000 Balts).

The scale of this achievement needs to be emphasized. Some people, notably certain categories of ethnic Germans from Yugoslavia and Romania, were left in limbo because the Potsdam agreements did not cover their case. But in the course of half a dozen years, operating in a scarred, embittered and impoverished continent emerging from six years of terrible war and already anticipating the divisions of the Cold War, the Allied Military Governments and the UN civilian agencies succeeded in repatriating, integrating or resettling unprecedented numbers—many millions— of desperate people from all across the continent and dozens of different nations and communities. By the end of 1951, when UNRRA and the IRO were replaced by the newly-established United Nations High Commission for Refugees, there were just 177,000 people left in displaced persons camps in Europe - mostly the aged and the infirm, because no-one wanted them. The last DP camp in Germany, at 1 Foehrenwald in Bavaria, closed in 1957.

The displaced persons and refugees of Europe had survived not just a general war but a whole series of local, civil wars. Indeed, from 1934 through 1949, Europe saw an unprecedented sequence of murderous civil conflicts within the boundaries of existing states. In many cases subsequent foreign occupation - whether by Germans, Italians or Russians-served above all to facilitate and legitimize the pursuit. of pre-war political agendas and antagonisms by new and violent means. The occupiers were not neutral, of course. Typically they joined forces with factions within the occupied nation to fight a common foe. In this way, a political tendency or ethnic minority that had been at a disadvantage in peacetime politics was able to exploit the altered circumstances to settle local scores. The Germans, especially, were pleased to mobilize and exploit such sentiments not merely to divide and thus more easily conquer, but also to reduce the trouble and cost of administering and policing their conquered territories: they could rely on local collaborators to do it for them.

Since 1945 the term 'collaborators' has acquired a distinctive and pejorative moral connotation. But wartime divisions and affiliations often carried local implications altogether more complicated and ambiguous than the simple post-war attributions - of 'collaboration' and 'resistance' - would imply. Thus in occupied Belgium some Flemish-speakers, repeating a mistake they had already made in the First World War, were tempted by the promise of autonomy and a chance to break the French-speaking elite's hold on the Belgian state, and welcomed German rule. Here as elsewhere the Nazis willingly played the communal card so long as it suited their purposes-Flemish-speaking Belgian prisoners of war were released in 1940 when hostilities ceased, whereas French-speaking Walloons remained in p-o-w camps throughout the war.

In France and Belgium, as also in Norway, resistance against the Germans was real, especially in the last two years of the occupation when Nazi efforts to press-gang young men into forced labour in Germany drove many of them to opt for the *maquis* (forests) as a lesser risk. But not until the very end of the occupation did the number of active resisters exceed the numbers of those who collaborated with the Nazis out of belief, venality or self-interest-in France it has been estimated that the likely numbers of fully engaged men and women was about the same on both sides, between 160,000-170,000 at most. And their main enemy, more often than not, was each other: the Germans were largely absent.

In Italy, circumstances were more complicated. The Fascists had been in power for twenty years when Mussolini was overthrown in a palace coup in July 1943. Perhaps for this reason, there was little local resistance to the regime; most active anti-

Fascists were in exile. After September 1943, when the country officially became a 'Co-belligerent' on the Allied side, the German-occupied north of the country was between a puppet regime-Mussolini's 'Republic of Salo'-and a small but ageous partisan resistance co-operating with and sometimes supported by the advancing Allied armies.

But here, too, what was presented by both camps as a majority of right-thinking Italians locked in conflict with a marginal band of murderous terrorists in league with a foreign power was actually, for the years 1943-45, a genuine civil war, with significant number of Italians engaged on either side. The Fascists of Salo were indeed the unrepresentative collaborators of a brutal occupier; but the domestic support they could count on at the time was not negligible, and certainly not obviously less than that of their most aggressive opponents, the Communist-led partisans. The anti-Fascist resistance was in reality one side in a struggle among Italians whose memory came to be conveniently occluded in the post-war decades.

In eastern Europe matters were more complicated still. Slovaks and Croats took advantage of the German presence to establish notionally independent states in accordance with the cherished projects of pre-war separatist parties. In Poland the Germans were not looking for collaborators; but further north - in the Baltic States and even Finland - the Wehrmacht was initially welcomed as an alternative to occupation and absorption by the Soviet Union. Ukrainians especially did their best to capitalize on German occupation after 1941 to secure their long-sought independence, and the lands of eastern Galicia and western Ukraine saw a murderous civil conflict between Ukrainian and Polish partisans under the aegis of both anti-Nazi and anti-Soviet partisan warfare. In these circumstances, fine distinctions between ideological warfare, inter-communal conflict and the battle for political independence lost their meaning: not least for the local populations, the primary victims in every case.

Poles and Ukrainians fought with or against the Wehrmacht, the Red Army and each other according to the moment and the place. In Poland this conflict, which after 1944 transmuted into guerilla warfare against the Communist state, took the lives of some 30,000 Poles in the years 1945-48. In the Soviet-occupied Ukraine, the I last partisan commander, Roman Shukhevych, was killed near Lviv in 1950, though sporadic anti-Soviet activity persisted for a few years more in Ukraine and Estonia in particular.

It was in the Balkans, however, that the Second World War was experienced above all as a civil war, and a uniquely murderous one at that. In Yugoslavia the meaning of conventional labels - collaborator, resister - was particularly opaque. What was Draza Mihajlovic, the Serb leader of the Chetnik partisans? A patriot? A resister? A collaborator? What was it that moved men to fight? Resistance against the (German, Italian) occupier? Revenge against domestic political enemies from the inter-war Yugoslav state? Inter-community conflicts among Serbs, Croats and Muslims? Pro- or anti-Communist goals? For many people more than one motive ' was in play.

Thus Ante Pavelic's *Ustase* regime in the Croatian puppet state murdered Serbs (well over 200,000) and Muslims. But Mihajlovic's (mostly Serb) royalist partisans also killed Muslims. For this reason if no other the Muslims of Bosnia sometimes cooperated with the German armies in their own defence. Tito's Communist partisans, despite their strategic goal of ridding Yugoslavia of German and Italian forces, devoted time and resources to destroying the Chetniks first - not least just because this was an objective within their reach. Writing a decade later and already disillusioned with the outcome of the battles between partisans and Chetniks in which he himself played a heroic role, Milovan Djilas bore witness to the real experience of war and resistance in occupied Yugoslavia: 'For hours, both armies clambered up rocky ravines to escape annihilation or to destory a little group of their countrymen, often neighbours, on some jutting peak six thousand feet high, in a starving, bleeding, captive land. It came to mind that this was what had become of all our theories and visions of the workers' and peasants' struggle against the bourgeoisie'

Further south, Greece-like Yugoslavia-experienced World War Two as a cycle of invasion, occupation, resistance, reprisals and civil war, culminating in five weeks of clashes in Athens between Communists and the royalist-backing British forces n December 1944, after which an armistice was agreed upon in February 1945-Fighting broke out again in 1946, however, and lasted three more years, ending with the rout of the Communists from their strongholds in the mountainous north. While there is no doubt that the Greek resistance to the Italians and the Germans was more effective than the better known resistance movements in France or Italy - in 1943-44 alone it killed or wounded over 6,000 German soldiers - the harm it brought to Greeks themselves was greater still by far. The KKE (Communist) guerillas and the Athens-based and western-backed government of the king terrorized villages, destroyed communications and divided the country for decades to come. By the time the fighting was over, in September 1949,10 percent of the population was homeless. The Greek civil war lacked many of the ethnic complexities of the fighting in Yugoslavia and Ukraine (but not all – the Greek Communists opportunistic post-war support for the annexation to Communist Bulgaria of ethnically Slav regions of northern Greece did little to advance their cause) but in human terms it was costlier still.

The post-war impact of these European civil wars was immense. In a simple sense they meant that the war in Europe did not finish in 1945, with the departure of the Germans: it is one of the traumatic features of civil war that even after the enemy is defeated he remains in place; and with him the memory of the conflict. But the internecine struggles of these years did something else. Together with the unprecedented brutality of the Nazi and, later, Soviet occupations they corroded the very fabric of the European state. After them, nothing would ever be the same. In the truest sense of a much-abused term, they transformed World War Two - Hitler's war - into a social revolution. To begin with, the serial occupation of territory by foreign

powers inevitably oded the authority and legitimacy of local rulers. Purportedly autonomous in name, the Vichy regime in France - like Father Jozef Tiso's Slovak state or Pavelic's Ustase regime in Zagreb - was a dependent agent of Hitler and most people knew it. At municipal level the collaborating local authorities in Holland or Bohemia retained a degree of initiative, but only by avoiding any conflict with the wishes of their German masters. Further east the Nazis and later the Soviets replaced preexisting institutions with men and machinery of their own, except where it suited them to exploit for a while local divisions and ambitions for their own advantage. Ironically, it was only in those countries allied with the Nazis - Finland, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary - and thus left to rule themselves that a degree of real local independence was preserved, at least until 1944.

With the exception of Germany and the heartland of the Soviet Union, every continental European state involved in World War Two was occupied at least twice: first by its enemies, then by the armies of liberation. Some countries - Poland, the Baltic states, Greece, Yugoslavia - were occupied three times in five years. With each succeeding invasion the previous regime was destroyed, its authority dismantled, its elites reduced. The result in some places was a clean slate, with all the old hierarchies discredited and their representatives compromised. In Greece, for example, the pre-war dictator Metaxas had swept aside the old parliamentary class. The Germans removed Metaxas. Then the Germans too were pushed out in their turn, and those who had collaborated with them stood vulnerable and disgraced.

The liquidation of old social and economic elites was perhaps the most dramatic change. The Nazis' extermination of Europe's Jews was not only devastating in its own right. It had significant social consequences for those many towns and cities of central Europe where Jews had constituted the local professional class: doctors, lawyers, businessmen, professors. Later, often in the very same towns, another important part of the local bourgeoisie - the Germans - was also removed, as we have seen. The outcome was a radical transformation of the social landscape - and an opportunity for Poles, Balts, Ukrainians, Slovaks, Hungarians and others to move up into the jobs (and homes) of the departed.

This leveling process, whereby the native populations of central and eastern Europe took the place of the banished minorities, was Hitler's most enduring contribution to European social history. The German plan had been to destroy the Jews and the educated local intelligentsia in Poland and the western Soviet Union, reduce the rest of the Slav peoples to neo-serfdom and place the land and the government in the hands of resettled Germans. But with the arrival of the Red Army I and the expulsion of the Germans the new situation proved uniquely well adapted to the more truly radicalizing projects of the Soviets.

One reason for this was that the occupation years had seen not just rapid and bloodily-enforced upward social mobility but also the utter collapse of law and the habits of life in a legal state. It is misleading to think of the German occupation of continental Europe as a time of pacification and order under the eye of an omniscient and ubiquitous power. Even in Poland, the most comprehensively policed and repressed of all the occupied territories, society continued to function in defiance of the new rulers: the Poles constituted for themselves a parallel underground 1 world of newspapers, schools, cultural activities, welfare services, economic exchange and even an army - all of them forbidden by the Germans and carried on itsMe the law and at great personal risk.

But that was precisely the point. To live normally in occupied Europe meant the law: in the first place the laws of the occupiers (curfews, travel regulations, race laws, etc) but also conventional laws and norms as well. Most common people who did not have access to farm produce were obliged, for example, to resort to the black market or illegal barter just to feed their families. Theft - whether the state, from a fellow citizen or from a looted Jewish store - was so widespread that in the eyes of many people it ceased to be a crime. Indeed, with gendarmes, policemen and local mayors representing and serving the occupier, and with the occupying forces themselves practicing organized criminality at the expense of selected civilian populations, common felonies were transmuted into acts of resistance (albeit often in post-liberation retrospect).

Above all, violence became part of daily life. The ultimate authority of the modern state has always rested *in extremis* on its monopoly of violence and its willingness to deploy force if necessary. But in occupied Europe authority was a function of force alone, deployed without inhibition. Curiously enough, it was precisely in these circumstances that the state *lost* its monopoly of violence. Partisan groups and armies competed for a legitimacy determined by their capacity to enforce their writ in a given territory. This was most obviously true in the more remote regions of Greece, Montenegro and the eastern marches of Poland where the authority of modern states had never been very firm. But by the end of World War Two it also applied in parts of France and Italy.

Violence bred cynicism. As occupying forces, both Nazis and Soviets precipitated a war of all against all. They discouraged not just allegiance to the defunct authority of the previous regime or state, but any sense of civility or bond between individuals, and on the whole they were successful. If the ruling power behaved brutally and lawlessly to your neighbour - because he was a Jew, or a member of an educated elite or ethnic minority, or had found disfavour in the eyes of the regime or for no obvious reason at all - then why should you show any more respect for him yourself? Indeed, it was often prudent to go further and curry pre-emptive favour with the authorities by getting your neighbour in trouble. Throughout German-occupied (and even unoccupied) Europe until the very end, the incidence of anonymous reports, personal accusations and plain rumors was strikingly high. Between 1940 and 1944 there were huge numbers of denunciations to the SS, the Gestapo and local police in Hungary, Norway, the Netherlands and France. Many were not even for reward or material gain. Under Soviet rule too – notably in Soviet occupied eastern Poland from 1939-41 – the Jacobin style encouragement of informers and the (French

revolutionary habit of casting doubt on the loyalty of others flourished unrestrained.

Everyone, in short, has good reason to be afraid of everyone else. Suspicious of other people's motives, individuals were quick to denounce them for some presumed deviation or illicit advantage. There was no protection to be had from above: indeed, those in power were often the most lawless of all. For most Europeans in the years 1939-45 *rights*-civil, legal, political no longer existed. The state ceased to be the repository of law and justice; on the contrary, under Hitler's New Order government was itself the leading predator. The Nazis' attitude to life and limb is justifiably notorious; but their treatment *of property* may actually have been their most important practical legacy to the shape of the post-war world.

Under German occupation, the right to property was at best contingent. Europe's Jews were simply stripped of money, goods, homes, shops and businesses. Their property was divided up among Nazis, collaborators and their friends, with the residue made available for looting and theft by the local community. But se-questration and confiscation went far beyond the Jews. The 'right' of possession was shown to be fragile, often meaningless, resting exclusively on the goodwill, interests or whim of those in power.

There were winners as well as losers in this radical series of involuntary prop-1 erty transactions. With Jews and other ethnic victims gone, their shops and apartments could be occupied by local people; their tools, furniture and clothes were confiscated or stolen by new owners. This process went furthest in the 'killing zone' from Odessa to the Baltic, but it happened everywhere - returning concentration camp survivors in Paris or Prague in 1945 often found their home occupied by wartime 'squatters' who angrily asserted their own claim and refused to leave. In this way hundreds of thousands of ordinary Hungarians, Poles, Czechs, Dutch, French and others became complicit in the Nazi genocide, if only as its beneficiaries.

In every occupied country factories, vehicles, land, machinery and finished goods were expropriated without compensation for the benefit of the new rulers in what amounted to wholesale *de facto* nationalization. In central and eastern Europe especially, substantial private holdings and a number of financial institutions were taken over by the Nazis for their war economy. This was not always a radical break with precedent. The disastrous turn to autarky in the region after 1931 had entailed a high level of state intervention and manipulation and in Poland, Hungary and Romania the state-owned business sector had expanded considerably in j the immediate pre-war and early war years, as a pre-emptive defense against German economic penetration. State-direction of the economy in eastern Europe did not begin in 1945.

The post-war dispossession of the German populations from Poland to Yugoslavia completed the radical transformation that had begun with the Germans' own removal of the Jews. Many ethnic Germans in the Sudetenland, Silesia, Transylvania I and northern Yugoslavia owned significant holdings in land. When these were I taken into state hands for redistribution the impact was immediate. In Czechoslovakia, goods an property seized from the Germans and their collaborators amounted to one-quarter of the national wealth, while the redistribution of farmland alone directly benefited over 300,000 peasants, agricultural labourers and their families. Changes on this scale can only be described as revolutionary. Like the war itself, they represented both a radical caesura, a clear break with the past and a preparation for even bigger changes still to come.

In liberated *western* Europe there was little German-owned property to redistribute and the war had not been experienced as quite the cataclysm that it was further east. But there, too, the legitimacy of constituted authorities was cast into question. The local administrations in France, Norway and the Benelux countries had not covered themselves in glory. On the contrary, they had on the whole performed with alacrity the occupiers' bidding. In 1941 the Germans were able to run occupied Norway with just 806 administrative personnel. The Nazis administered France with just 1,500 of their own people. So confident were they of the reliability of the French police and militias that they assigned (in addition to their administrative staff) a mere 6,000 German civil and military police to ensure the compliance of a nation of 35 million. The same was true in the Netherlands. In postwar testimony the head of German security in Amsterdam averred that 'the main support of the German forces in the police sector and beyond was the Dutch police. Without it, not 10 percent of the German occupation tasks would have been fulfilled.' Contrast Yugoslavia, which required the unflagging attention of entire German military divisions just to contain the armed partisans.

This was one difference between western and eastern Europe. Another was the Nazis' own treatment of occupied nations. The Norwegians, Danes, Dutch, Belgians, French and, after September 1943, the Italians were humiliated and exploited. But unless they were Jews, or Communists or resisters of one kind or another they were, on the whole, left alone. In consequence, the liberated peoples of western Europe could imagine a return to something resembling the past. Indeed, even the parliamentary democracies of the inter-war years now looked a bit less shabby thanks to the Nazi interlude - Hitler had successfully discredited at least one radical alternative to political pluralism and the rule of law. The exhausted populations o continental western Europe aspired above all to recover the trappings of normal We in a properly regulated state. The situation in the newly liberated states of western Europe, then, was bad enough. But in central Europe, in the words of John J. McCloy of the US Control Commission in Germany, there was 'complere economic, social and political collapse...the extent of which is unparalleled in history unless one goes back to the collapse of the Roman Empire.' McCloy was speaking of Germany, where the Allied Military Governments had to build everything form scratch: law, order, services, communications, administration. But at least they had the resources to do it. Further east, matters were worse still.

Thus it was Hitler, at least as much as Stalin, who drove a wedge into the continent and divided it. The history of central Europe - of the lands of the German and

Habsburg Empires, the northern parts of the old Ottoman Empire and even the westernmost territories of the Russian Czars - had always been different in degree from that of the nation states of the West. But it had not necessarily differed in kind. Before 1939 Hungarians, Romanians, Czechs, Poles, Croats and Baits might look enviously upon the more fortunate inhabitants of France or the Low Countries. But they saw no reason not to aspire to similar prosperity and stability in their own right. Romanians dreamed of Paris. The Czech economy in 1937 outperformed its Austrian neighbour and was competitive with Belgium.

The war changed everything. East of the Elbe, the Soviets and their local representatives inherited a sub-continent where a radical break with the past had already taken place. What was not utterly discredited was irretrievably damaged. Exiled governments from Oslo, Brussels or the Hague could return from London and hope to take up the legitimate authority they had been forced to relinquish in 1940. But 1 the old rulers of Bucharest and Sofia, Warsaw, Budapest and even Prague had no future: their world had been swept aside by the Nazis' transformative violence. It remained only to decide the political shape of the new order that must now replace the unrecoverable past.