

acquiescence to the disgorgement of some nine or ten million German from Eastern Europe in the wake of Nazi defeat. How this largest of all mass expulsions was to be achieved in an 'orderly and humane manner' – as Western leaders, not least in the public pronouncements of Churchill repeatedly proclaimed – remains a mystery. Some two million Germans are estimated to have died in the process, large numbers of them by direct violence. But perhaps the explanation – and here Naimark does offer important connections – lies in the way the earlier, thoroughly atrocious population disentanglements from the Greek–Turkish war were mentally recast in the Western rulebook as an acceptable route to statebuilding. Perhaps this indeed also helps to explain how a further time around, when the same *modus operandi* was being advanced by both nationalist Serbs and Croats in Bosnia, the response of the West, in the form of the Owen–Vance plan, was effectively to endorse it. Again, unfortunately, Naimark avoids the significance of the Western failing. But then, nowhere in his text does he make it sufficiently clear that the transmission belt, which ends in mass death and violence in Eastern Europe and beyond, begins with the emerging linkage between nation and state in the West.

Ultimately this is somewhat surprising given that Naimark's otherwise discerning and often provocative text makes it perfectly clear that ethnic cleansing is a quite plausible corollary to the quintessentially 'normative' goals of the nation-state. When Polish communists in the late 1940s tried to cohere Kashubians, Mazurians, Silesians, not to say Polish speakers from the Kresy, into a single Polonia they were doing no more than re-enacting the most deeply held aspirations of all Polish nationalists, whether of the Pilsudski or Dmowski varieties. Where communities too obviously held on to local identities and loyalties they were forcibly made to fit the mould. Where they still would not or could meet the 'national' criteria, they were physically ejected. Yet did Poland receive censure for these actions? Of course not. How could it be when what the Polish state was doing – even under communist management – was a consistent extension of a universal nationalising trajectory. We may assume contemporary ethnic heterogeneity in our Western societies is a positive by-product of a liberalism that repudiates these monolithic aspirations. But in large respect this has been a function of power. In the past, Britain's own rise to an international dominance was founded on either emasculating or ejecting its recalcitrant and 'savage' Celtic fringe. Take away the hegemony and with it the impunity and our governmental leaders are as likely to be as allergic to 'otherness' as any tin-pot Talat or Tadjman.

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Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak (eds.), **Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944–1948**. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001. Pp.343. £22.95. ISBN 0-7425-1094-8.

The consensus is growing among historians that ethnic cleansing was the decisive event of twentieth-century history and, quite particularly, the history of East

Central Europe. Political movements and ideologies come and go, but the results of ethnic cleansing are irreversible. Even the Holocaust, unique as it was because the Germans, its main perpetrators, wished to kill every Jew in Europe, was only one major step in the process of ethnic cleansing. Not only did the *Sboah* cause the almost complete disappearance of the Jewish minority between Estonia and Greece but it allowed for a no less momentous second step, the elimination of the nearly 12 million-strong German minority from the same area. This was complemented by the flight, deportation, expulsion or massacre of hundreds of thousands of Poles, Ukrainians, Hungarians and Balkan peoples from their homelands. As Mark Kramer of Harvard University writes in the Introduction to *Redrawing Nations*, the price of this 'purification' process was 1.5 million dead in the post-war era alone. East Central Europe is today made up mainly of mono-ethnic states, although, ironically, the influx of immigrants from the Third World might play havoc with this dubious achievement.

There can be no doubt regarding the economic, cultural and moral degradation caused by ethnic purification; still, Mark Kramer argues persuasively that the 'wanton destruction and cruelty inflicted on millions of Europeans ... were offset in some small way by the long-term stability that resulted from ethnic cleansing' (p.8). But are the new frontiers truly stable and have they justified the price? Winston Churchill was persuaded that they have; the two editors of this book fear that resentment caused by the expulsions might surface again. To this we may add that nothing will ever compensate us for the loss of the colour and cultural cross-fertilisation that was once East Central Europe.

This fine and highly welcome compendium originates from a conference held in Poland in 1997, entitled 'Forced Migration in Europe during and after World War II'. Of the two editors, who are also contributors, Ana Siljak is at the Davis Center for Russian Studies at Harvard and Philipp Ther is at the Free University in Berlin. The 14 other contributors are mostly from Poland, the US and Germany, but also from the Czech Republic, Canada and Great Britain. The main topics, besides the generalised treatments, are the creation of the Polish nation-state, retribution and expulsions from Czechoslovakia, and the lot of German refugees in Eastern and Western Germany. One would love to see a few essays on such other countries that were also deeply involved in the redrawing of nations, or suffering from ethnic cleansing, but one cannot ask for everything.

The main arguments of the many essays are essentially the same, which has led to many repetitions, but each author also has his or her specific message and the reader is given an extraordinary amount of factual information. Not that all the statistical figures are reliable; chaotic data are in the nature of reports on ethnic cleansing. For instance, as several authors insist, in this ethnically super-conscious age, when people gladly killed in the name of nationality, millions of East Central Europeans were unaware of their ethnicity, or quietly changed it whenever it seemed necessary. In fact, some of the best writings in the book discuss the unsettled nationality of such people as, for instance, those who in the Polish pre-war census declared themselves to be 'tutejsy', that is people 'who are from here'; or the Masurians of East Prussia who spoke a Polish dialect containing many German loan words; or the Upper Silesians, who spoke either Polish or German but were ready to change their nationality according to need.

Our authors agree that what happened in East Central Europe surpassed the

post-Roman *Völkerwanderung* in its extent and demographic significance. Also, that even though ethnic cleansing was not unknown in the earlier centuries, it became a widespread practice only after the First World War when, instead of attempts at assimilation, successive governments chose the 'un-mixing' of peoples. The latter was given tremendous impetus during the Second World War, especially by the Nazis, who not only exterminated the Jews and killed or deported millions of Slavs, but 'gathered in' thousands of fellow-Germans from the Baltic countries and elsewhere, thereby opening the gates for the expulsion of the other Germans.

At the end of the Second World War, the major ethnic cleansings were those of the Germans from Poland as well as Czechoslovakia, and of the Poles from Ukraine as well as the Ukrainians from Poland. While the atrocious behaviour of many Poles towards German civilians is somewhat understandable in view of the horrors Germans, among them local *Volksdeutsche*, perpetrated in Poland during the war, Czech and Slovak atrocities are all the more reprehensible as Slovakia had been a fascist state and a German ally while the Czechs generally lived and worked peacefully under German rule. As Eagle Glassheim shows in his fine essay on post-war expulsion, the Czech Partisans and Revolutionary Guards who shot, tortured and beat German civilians, in their majority old men, women and children, had had little to do with the small wartime Czech resistance movement. The fault for this lies clearly with President Edvard Beneš and his communist associates whose racist views barely differed from those of the Nazis. By then, the communists of East Central Europe, especially the Czechoslovak communists, had long shed any trace of internationalism and were in the forefront of the struggle for an ethnically 'pure' Czechoslovakia.

One of the many consequences of ethnic cleansing was the tying of Poland and Czechoslovakia to the Soviet Union, their only protector against a presumably revanchist Germany. Another consequence was, as Benjamin Frommer shows in his essay, that post-war expulsions often weakened retribution for war crimes. Ironically, many German war criminals, who ended up being expelled to Germany, fared far better than Czech collaborators who languished in jail.

One of the least known and more horrible episodes of recent East Central European history was the mutual persecution and forced population exchanges between Poles and Ukrainians. These purges began during the war, sometimes with the help, at other times against the will of the German occupiers, and continued after the war, with the encouragement of the Allies, especially the Soviet Union. Here, however, our authors offer us a glimmer of hope: while the Czech politicians and people stubbornly refuse to acknowledge that there was anything wrong with their post-war application of collective punishment, Poles and Ukrainians have officially expressed regrets; relations between the two countries are excellent today. So the question remains open: does ethnic cleansing at least occasionally help in preventing never-ending internecine conflicts? Whatever the answer, the fact remains that ethnic cleansing happened nearly everywhere in the age of modern nationalism, and that both governments and peoples wanted cleansing to take place.

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