

## PREFACE

Europe is still suffering from the consequences of World Wars I and II. While both wars, in fact the “Thirty Years War” of the twentieth century, resulted in millions of killed or heavily wounded soldiers and civilian dead, genocides against the Jews, Armenians, Poles, Gypsies (including Roma and Sinti), Chechens-Ingush, and Crimean Tatars – altogether in World War I almost seventeen million people lost their lives, in World War II at least 60 million –, millions of widows and orphans, more than 35 million expellees and refugees (Armenians, Jews, Germans, Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Finns, Magyars, Slovaks, Romanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Italians, Chinese, Koreans), as well as destroyed economies and societies, there are two consequences that have been felt until the present day: On the one hand, after both wars the “victors” made poor or inappropriate political, economic and social decisions that undermined peaceful developments, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the Middle East. On the other hand, both wars aggravated mutual distrust among the nations and created memories that still strongly divided European, Middle East and East Asian nations today – such as the Germans and the Poles, the Poles and the Russians, the Baltic peoples and the Russians, the Germans and the Russians, the Germans and the Czechs, the Czechs and the Austrians, the Austrians and the Slovenes, the Slovaks and the Magyars, the Magyars and the Romanians, the Magyars and the Serbs, the Serbs and the Croats, the Serbs and the Bosnian Muslims, the Croats and the Italians, the Slovenes and the Italians, the Turks and the Greeks as well as the Chinese and the Japanese, and the Koreans and the Japanese.<sup>1</sup>

Seventy years after the end of World War II, the memories of political decisions, legal acts, crimes against humanity, genocides and expulsions in East-Central and Southeastern Europe in the first half of the twentieth century are still present. Over the last decades, these memories have changed from the “war generation,” i.e. the generation that fought and suffered in World War II, to the generations of their children (the “war children,” born between the 1930s and 1950s) and grandchildren (the “war grandchildren,” born between the 1960s and 1980s). Particularly in the catastrophic decade between 1938 and 1948 the relationships between the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. DEAR and FOOT, *The Oxford Companion*; FLACKE, *Mythen der Nationen 1945*; STRACHAN, *The First World War*; THAMER, *Verführung*; NAIMARK, *Fires of Hatred*; TOMASEVICH, *War and Revolution*; STEINER, *The Lights*; KŘEN, *Dvě století*; SHEEHAN, *Soldiers*; WEHLER, *Gesellschaftsgeschichte 4*; STEINER, *The Triumph*; DAVIES, *Europe at War*; MAZOWER, *Hitler's Empire*; TOOZE, *The Deluge*; DEÁK, *Europe*; KERSHAW, *To Hell*; LIBER, *Total Wars*.

Germans, Austrians, Magyars, and Italians on the one hand, and the Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, and Bosniaks on the other, were shattered in a way that living together seemed impossible in the future. At no time previously in the over one thousand years of history of relations between the peoples on the Danube, Elbe, Vltava, Oder, Morava, Tisza, Mura, Drava, Sava, and Isonzo had there been such a low point. It is the essential aim of this book to present the historical, political, economic, social, psychological and legal premises, contexts, and consequences of occupation, annexation, repression, war crimes, genocide, collaboration, resistance, retribution, displacement, and expulsion in the Bohemian lands and in Slovakia, as well as in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Serbia between 1914 and 1948. Concerning the 1.2 million soldiers killed and 400,000 civilian death in the Habsburg Monarchy as well as the 600,000 military and civilians casualties in Serbia and Montenegro in World War I, and the 1.2 million people killed in Yugoslavia and 600,000 from Czechoslovakia in World War II – one could add 450,000 deaths from Hungary, and 370,000 from Austria –, we can speak of second “bloodlands” south of the Sudeten and Carpathian Mountains and between the Adriatic Sea and the Iron Gate.<sup>2</sup>

This book is based on my German-language monograph “*Hitler–Beneš–Tito*.”<sup>3</sup> In presentations at academies and universities in Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Olomouc, Bratislava, Cracow, Wrocław, Novi Sad, Ljubljana, Split, Sarajevo, Rome, Bolzano, Munich, Leipzig, Hildesheim, Leiden, Minneapolis, Stanford, and Moscow, I received a number of useful stimuli to shorten some narratives and to sharpen my arguments. The most frequent question concerned my title including the three main actors. In several discussions, colleagues asked why I had not added Stalin. At the *Institut slavjanovedenija* of the Russian Academy of Sciences, I gave the answer: “Eta vaša djela” – This is your task. Nonetheless, in 1945 the three political actors Hitler, Beneš, and Tito – all three children of the Habsburg Monarchy and its educational as well as social system – stood for the total break between the Germans, (German-)Austrians, and *Volksdeutsche* (Sudeten and Carpathian Germans, Danube Swabians, Lower Styrians and *Gottscheer*) on the one hand and the Czechs, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, and Bosniaks on the other. Because the “explosion of ethnic-racist nationalism” (Ian Kershaw) between these nations and ethnic groups did not start in 1938, I also have to consider the early beginnings of the ethno-nationalization and racialization in the Habsburg Empire since 1848 (similar developments occurred

<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to Gustavo Corni (Trento) for this comparison. Cf. SNYDER, *Bloodlands*, ix (map); BANAC, *Dimitrov*; BORODZIEJ and LEMBERG, *Die Deutschen*; FERENC, *Quellen*; HOFFMANN et al., *Odsun* 1, 2; HRVATSKI INSTITUT, *Represija*; KÁRNÝ et al., *Deutsche Politik*; KENNAN, *From Prague*; KULTURSTIFTUNG, *Vertreibung*; SCHIEDER et al., *Dokumentation der Vertreibung* IV, V; PETRANOVIĆ and ZEČEVIĆ, *Jugoslavija*; ROMSICS, “Hungary”; SCHVARC et al., *Tretia ríša* I, II.

<sup>3</sup> ARNOLD SUPPAN, *Hitler–Beneš–Tito. Konflikt, Krieg und Völkermord in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa*, 3 vols. (Internationale Geschichte/International History 1/1-3, Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2014, third edition, 2017).

in the Russian and Ottoman as well as in the British, French, and German Empires), the increasing nationalization of all spheres of life, the first real clashes at the fronts and in the hinterlands in World War I, the bad ideological, political, economic, social and cultural consequences of the poor decision-makings at the Paris Peace Conference, the irreconcilable demands for territorial, financial and military revisionism, and the smoldering confrontations between the “victors” and the “vanquished” in the inter-war period. Hitler’s imperialistic and racist – particularly anti-Semitic and anti-Slavic – ideology and his ruthlessly aggressive policy from 1938 onward took all paths of nationalist confrontation, hostility, and hatred including terrorist attacks against civilians, deportations, killings of hostages, expulsions, and genocides. Of course, Hitler was partly supported by Mussolini and Stalin as well as by some satellite politicians like Antonescu, Horthy, Tiso, and Pavelić. Although World War II in Europe ended in May 1945 and the main waves of expulsion were over by 1948, memories of the catastrophic decade 1938–48 did not end and still affect the children and grandchildren of the “war generation.”

Apart from thousands of scholarly books and articles on World War II as well as innumerable novels, dramas, and songs, there are particularly several US, British, French, Italian, German, Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Yugoslav, Russian, and Austrian movies, which have roused these and many other populations, for example “Holocaust” 1978 (Marvin J. Chomsky), “Mephisto” 1981 (István Szabó), “The White Rose” 1982 (Michael Verhoeven), “Shoah” 1985 (Claude Lanzman), “Schindler’s List” 1993 (Steven Spielberg), “La vita è bella” 1997 (Roberto Benigni), “Musíme si pomáhat” [Divided We Fall] 2000 (Jan Hřebejk), “The Pianist” 2002 (Roman Polanski), “Inglorious basterds” 2007 (Quentin Tarantino), “Katyń” 2007 (Andrzej Wajda), “Die Flucht” 2007 (Kai Wessel), “Die Fälscher” 2007 (Stefan Ruzowitzky), “Tito – posledni svedoci testamenta” [Tito – the last witnesses of the legacy] 2007 (Lordan Zafranović), and “Unsere Mütter, unsere Väter” 2013 (Philipp Kadelbach). These films spoke about butcheries of the Nazis, the Stalinists, and Fascists, about the disasters of the Jewish, Polish, Czech, Yugoslav, Italian, French, German and Austrian nations, last but not least, about the unhealed wounds in the European history in the twentieth century.

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Arnold Suppan  
Vienna, in December 2018

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. the reviews in *Annali* (Eva Pfanzelter), *Bohemia* (Jana Osterkamp), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Karl-Peter Schwarz), *Historische Zeitschrift* (Holm Sundhaussen), *H-Net*, *Clio-online* (Stefan Troebst), *Militargeschichtliche Zeitschrift* (Hans Hecker), *Neue Zurcher Zeitung* (Andreas Oplatka), *Prager Zeitung* (Josef Fullenbach), *Prague Papers on the History of International Relations* (Lukas Novotny), and *Sudost-Forschungen* (Norman M. Naimark).