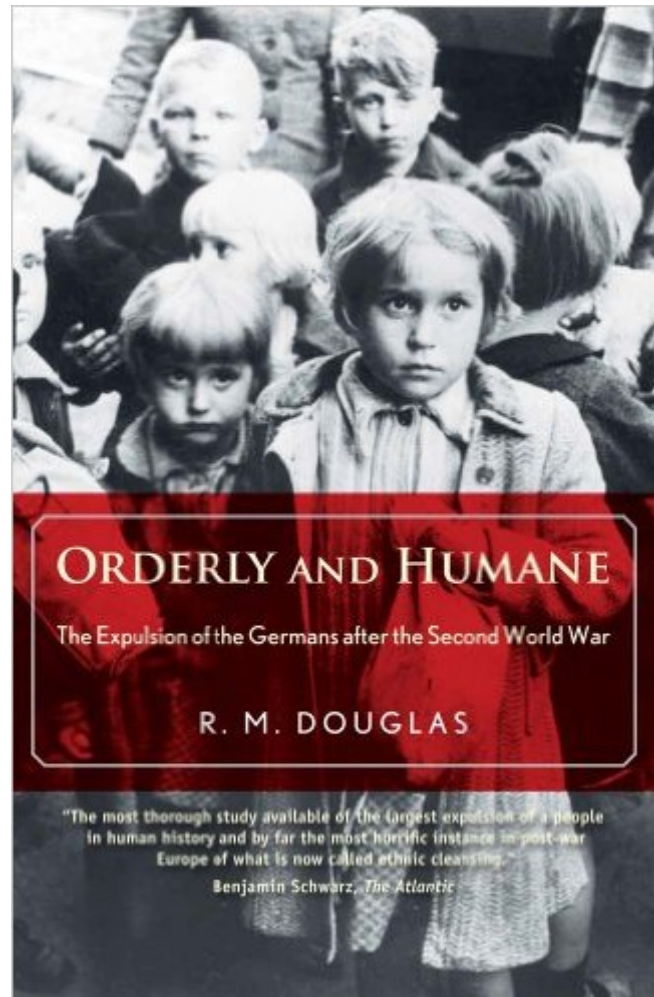


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Orderly And Humane: The Expulsion Of The Germans After The Second World War



Synopsis

Immediately after the Second World War, the victorious Allies authorized and helped to carry out the forced relocation of German speakers from their homes across central and southern Europe to Germany. This book tells the full story of this immense man-made catastrophe.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mr. Douglas has written a very informative book on a subject that is too often neglected by historians of Europe. This subject is the expulsion of fourteen million ethnic Germans from mainly Poland and Czechoslovakia, but also from other East European countries like Yugoslavia after World War II. The expellees were expelled to the remaining parts of Germany that had been heavily damaged after the war and had huge problems in feeding and housing their populations. In the case of Poland most of the persons expelled came from land originally German that was transferred to Poland in the Yalta and Potsdam settlements during and after World War II. These expellees in particular can say we did not cross the border but the border crossed us. Similarly in Czechoslovakia long time German residents in the Sudeten mountains were transferred after World War I against their will to Czechoslovak sovereignty. The treatment of the German expellees was horrendous. The expellees were first decreed to have lost their nationality and civil rights. They were viciously discriminated against in food rations and almost every other social economic area. They were often placed in camps that provided little food, starvation rations, inadequate or no medical care and housed in overcrowded rooms on straw or no bedding. Starvation and disease took a tremendous toll of human life. After weeks of months or years as slave labor in the camps the would

be expellees were packed onto freight cars for a long ride to Germany that could last for weeks. During this time expellees continued to suffer to disease and starvation that caused many deaths. When arriving in Germany their weakened condition in a devastated land caused more deaths. One of the more accurate estimates of the number of expellee deaths is 2.

R.M. Douglas has written a substantial book on a topic that is little known in post-World War II history, the expulsion of Germans from Eastern Europe. What makes this book different from previous works on this subject is that the author uses material from various archives across Europe instead of testimony from expellees alone. As the war wound down, many ethnic groups in the east were in mood of exacting revenge for the mistreatment that they received at the hands of the Nazis between 1939 and 1945. Since many of the German men were either dead, in prison camps or missing, the expulsions fell mainly on the women, children and elderly who were unable to serve in the military. Men like Eduard Benes of Czechoslovakia were keen on getting rid of the Germans as he and his fellow countrymen believed that their presence in the Sudetenland portion of the country posed a threat to their nationalistic desires. The Poles were stripped of their lands east of the River Bug by the Soviets and as compensation were given German lands east of the Oder River. The resulting expulsions from the Sudetenland and the Polish "recovered territories" along with the force evictions by the Yugoslavs and the Romanians led to the deaths of at least 500,000 Germans. Little is said about this event because many at that time believed that the Germans "deserved it" and that it was overshadowed by the vastly higher numbers of dead that were a result of German atrocities. Nonetheless, this tragedy was the responsibility of the Allied forces who wanted to eliminate ethnic friction after the war, but in the end committed what we call today ethnic cleansing.

R.M. Douglas's expose of Allied complicity in Crimes Against Humanity at the end of World War II is so well written that it reads like a stunning novel. Very few Americans or Europeans know about the forcible removal of millions of innocent people, mostly women, children and the elderly, from their homes for transfer to German soil only because they had German names, ancestors or spoke the language. Their property was confiscated without redress and millions were dumped inside Germany without provision for jobs, housing or basic necessities. Many died during the ordeal. Such was the hatred at the end of the war, not just for Nazis but for all with German names, that this scheme of "ethnic cleansing" was planned and accomplished with the administrative support of the Allied governments. Douglas demystifies the personality of Edvard Benes, President of Czechoslovakia, who lobbied successfully for a homogenous homeland free of all minorities. Such

was the Czech hatred for Czechs of German ancestry that they treated them to the same persecutions the Nazis had visited on the Czechs. No one was spared including Jews who had survived the camps. Alice Herz-Sommer, a Czech concert pianist and ethnic German who had been imprisoned for two years in Theresienstadt concentration camp and whose mother and husband had perished in the Nazi death machine, returned to Prague to find German Jews were unwelcome. After her close friend a journalist, Michael Mares, published protest articles against the Czech treatment of anti-Nazi ethnic Germans, he was rewarded with a long prison sentence and Alice fled her homeland to resettle in Israel. Today at 108 years of age and a witness to all of the wars of the 20th and 21st centuries, Alice repeatedly cautions "hatred only leads to hatred."

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