

## Session I: Anatomy of Resistance

Session I will provide an overview of the interwar situation in Europe, the development of the resistance to fascism and its later connection to, and coordination with, the broader war effort. We will look at the different forms resistance took, the varied political views and motivations espoused by the resisters, including their hopes that their actions would contribute to the post-war world they hoped to build.

### Readings

- Roberts, J.M, *A Short History of the World*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1975. 433, 435-443.
- Michel, Henri, *The Shadow War: European Resistance, 1939-1945*, New York: Harper&Row, 1972. 7-15.
- Cooke, Philip and Ben Shepherd, eds., *Hitler's Europe Ablaze: Occupation, Resistance and Rebellion During WWII*, Skyhorse Publishing, 2013, 6-12.

### For Reference

Map — Occupation of Europe

Timeline, European War, 1939-1945

Timeline, 1918-1945. (Will send this later in email; here is web address.)

<http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/timeline/ww2time.htm>

*Videos:* We will watch and discuss these in class.

- Partisan on the Eastern Front during WW2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ens-3319CzI&feature=youtu.be>
- Miles Lerman, 'What is a Partisan?' #14 <http://www.jewishpartisans.org/partisans/miles-lerman>
- Aaron Bielski, "Will to Survive" #6, "Safe from the Nazis" #10. <http://www.jewishpartisans.org/partisans/tuvia-bielski>
- Ben Kamm "Liberation of work camp" #8. <http://www.jewishpartisans.org/partisans/ben-kamm>

In all previous wars the worst killer had been sickness. Large numbers of men, cramped together in makeshift conditions, with temporary sanitation, possibly with polluted water supplies and no fresh food provided ideal conditions for epidemics of dysentery, cholera, smallpox, typhus. Sickness killed three times as many British soldiers as the Boers in the South African War of 1899-1902. By the Great War, more was known about treatment and prevention, and industrial societies could supply and maintain huge armies in the field with food, proper clothing and medical supplies. For the first time since records were available most of the military casualties of a war were caused by direct enemy action.

Christians, too, suffered more heavily as the war went on. Food shortages and disease tended to kill children and old people first; they were less able to stand up to privation and sickness than the soldiers, who were usually men in the prime of life. The aim of the blockades each side sought to impose was nevertheless not only to starve people but factories - of minerals, chemicals, fuel, imported machinery. Military needs were enormous: boots, uniforms, barbed wire, timber for building, tools for digging - all were needed on a scale unimaginable a few years earlier. As for weapons and ammunition, there seemed never to be enough. A British infantry battalion of 1914 was allocated two machine guns; a few years later it had over fifty, which meant a huge increase in the use of ammunition. Artillerymen fired shells at a rate which quickly exhausted supplies in the first year of war. Later, huge bombardments took place; that before the Battle of the Somme, delivered by nearly 2,000 guns on a ten-mile front, was heard on Hampstead Heath, three hundred miles away.

By 1918, the war was world-wide, too. The 'Central Powers' (Austria-Hungary and Germany) had been lined up at the outset against the 'Allied' or 'Entente' powers (Great Britain, France and Russia). Within a few months Japan joined the Entente, and Turkey the other side. Italy came in against Austria-Hungary in 1915. In 1917, the United States entered the war on the allied side; in Europe a year and a half later, when the war ended, only Spain, Switzerland, Holland and the Scandinavian countries were still neutral. Even China had formally joined the Allied cause.

Statenate in Europe had spread the war thanks to the stopping-power of up-to-date weapons. Even the most pulverizing bombardments left defenders armed with machine-guns still able to halt an attack within a few thousand yards, and sometimes within hundreds. The Germans held Belgium and a big area of northern France into which they had advanced swiftly in the first weeks of the war and the western front settled down to a kind of siege warfare, with millions of men living in trenches and underground. Meanwhile, in the east, steady fighting slowly sapped the strength of the Russian army and undermined the logistical base on which it depended.

One attempted solution to deadlock was to invent new weapons - poison gas and the tank, for instance. Another was to look for allies and

## Roberts, Short History of World

superior numbers. Another was blockade. At the end of 1916, after failing to win the summer battles in France and with Russia still on her feet, the German High Command concluded that Germany was going to lose the war. The British naval blockade would strangle Germany unless something could be done quickly. It was decided to blockade Great Britain in its turn with submarines - 'U-boats', or 'undersea-boats'. They began to sink without warning any ships going to a British port, neutral or belligerent, unarmed or armed, carrying war material or not. This at last brought the United States into the war. After that, the Allies had only to win the battle against the U-boat; time would then steadily tell on the Allied side, as America's huge potential armies were brought to bear on the battlefield. Germany had one last stroke of good fortune: Russia collapsed in revolution in 1917. This released German forces for the western front, and with them the German generals launched in 1918 their last great attack. It only just failed. Allied counter-attack followed, and by late summer the Germans and their allies were everywhere (except in Russia) in retreat. In October, Germany asked for a suspension of fighting. A severe armistice was granted, and at eleven o'clock in the morning, on 11 November 1918, the Western Front at last fell silent.

### THE POST-WAR WORLD

When the fighting stopped, many people thought that things could simply go back to 'normal'. This was impossible. The world of 1914 was gone beyond recall, at least in Europe. In eastern Europe and the Near East, four empires had collapsed. The Russian army, ill-fed, badly-equipped and armed, had fought with magnificent courage, even winning a great victory against the Austrians in 1916. But by 1917 it had shot its bolt, and Russian industry alone could not meet her soldiers' needs. Much of it had been in Poland, one of the main battle zones, and the Russian railways had by 1916 all but collapsed. The country was paying the price for belated industrialization. The allies could only supply Russia through northern ports frozen for much of the year or through Vladivostok, six thousand miles from the front line.

In 1917 a 'March revolution' (which the Russians call the 'February revolution'), because of the different calendar Russia then followed) began with food riots in the capital. The disobedience and mutiny of the soldiers who should have suppressed them followed. The appearance of a new 'provisional' government then led to the abdication of the Tsar. At first, Russia's allies welcomed the change: the new government said it would go on fighting the Central Powers. It was a democratic government and looked a much more respectable ally than the old tsarist regime. But the Russian people wanted peace. Many also wanted to use the revolution to overturn what they saw as old injustices: peasants coveted the lands of the nobility, suppressed nationalities wanted independence, some industrial workers wanted to end private ownership of factories.

**THE END OF THE GREAT WAR AND  
THE PEACE SETTLEMENTS**

1918	
Mar 3	German-Soviet treaty of Brest-Litovsk.
Apr 10	Congress of Austrian subject peoples in Rome.
May 7	German-Romanian treaty of Bucharest.
June-Sept	Allies recognize independence of Czechoslovakia.
Sept 30	Allies grant armistice to Bulgaria.
Oct 29	Yugoslav independence proclaimed.
Oct 30	Allies grant armistice to Ottoman empire.
Nov 3	Armistice between Allies and Austria-Hungary.
Nov 9	German republic proclaimed.
Nov 10	Romania re-enters war on Allied side.
Nov 11	30-day Armistice ends fighting on the Western front.
Nov 13	Austrian republic proclaimed.
Nov 16	Hungarian republic proclaimed.
1919	
Jan 18	Peace conference opens at Paris.
June 28	Signature of treaty of Versailles with Germany.
Sept 10	Treaty of St Germain with Austrian republic.
Nov 27	Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria.
1920	
June 4	Treaty of Trianon with Hungary.
Aug 10	Treaty of Sevres with Ottoman monarchy.
1921	
Mar 16	Kemalist government of Turkey makes treaty with USSR.
1923	
July 24	Treaty of Lausanne and final peace terms between new Turkish government and allied powers.

In the cities the influence of the extremist Marxist majority of the Russian socialist party – the Bolsheviks – was strong. In November (October in the old calendar) they ousted the provisional government from power. It took two or three years for the Bolsheviks to establish

themselves securely in the teeth of foreign invasion, civil war and opposition from other revolutionary groups, but in the end they were successful. So Russia became the first state in the world with a Marxist government, dedicated formally to the advance of the cause of the world's workers, at least as the Bolsheviks saw it.

Meanwhile, in September 1918, Austria-Hungary had begun to break up in revolution. A few weeks later, revolution in Germany led William II to abdicate. In the Ottoman empire, long before this, revolt had broken out except Turkey itself. From the former Ottoman territories in the Near East and Arabia were to emerge in due course a series of new Arab states, as well as a new Turkey. Out of former German, Austro-Hungarian and Russian territory there appeared three new Baltic states (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia), a new country called Czechoslovakia, a new Austrian republic, a much reduced Hungary, a reborn Poland and a new South Slav state (later Montenegro). The details took years to settle, but that eastern Europe would be organized round new units was settled while the war was still going on.

#### *The peace settlements*

Of the treaties of 1919 the most important was that with Germany. The whole settlement was very much the work of the leaders of the victorious powers, Great Britain, France and, above all, the United States. President Woodrow Wilson was idealized by many Europeans. He had proclaimed his support for the principles of nationalism and democracy. The French, though, wanted above all guarantees against any future German revival and another invasion, and the British were anxious to revive a realistic balance of power in Europe. The outcome was a series of punitive impositions on Germany (which also had to give back Alsace and Lorraine and lost much territory in the east), and an unsystematic patchwork of attempts to settle frontiers so as to respect the demands of nations which had emerged *de facto* from the former Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires. Omnibusly, the United States did not, in the end, ratify the Versailles treaty with Germany, and Russia had not been represented in any of the peace negotiations.

It is scarcely surprising that the new Europe did not please everyone nor that some bitterly resented it. Nevertheless, it seemed to settle a lot of questions which had been troubling people for much of the previous century. It was at least possible to think that there would now be no more oppressed nations in Europe ruled by foreigners, the bugbear of nineteenth-century nationalists.

Unhappily, satisfying some nationalists almost always meant irritating others. Poland might be revived but many of her citizens were not Poles. Czechs and Slovaks might agree to live together in their new democratic republic, but the Germans in the Czech lands would have preferred

to go on under the Habsburgs. South Slavs and Romanians might be pleased to have done with Magyar rule, but the Magyars felt bitter over their lost territory. Soon, Croatsians were complaining about their treatment by the Serbs in the new state of Yugoslavia.

### *The League of Nations*

One possible ground for optimism existed in an attempt to organize international life as never before. As a first step towards regulating the behaviour of independent sovereign states towards one another, a League of Nations' was set up, with its headquarters at Geneva. This owed much to Woodrow Wilson, whose enthusiasm pushed the idea past his allies (though he subsequently failed to persuade his fellow country-men to join the League). Almost at once, the League began to intervene - with some success - in disputes between states which might in the past have led to armed conflict. It also took up economic problems and the tragedies of the 'refugees', millions of whom were confronting central and eastern Europe and the Near East with grave demands on their limited and over-strained resources.

The shattering of empires, the triumph of long-suppressed national demands and the creation of the League were the most obvious features of a new international order. It did not spring to the eye so readily that for the first time since the Turks had menaced it in the sixteenth century, Europe's future had been settled by an outside power. Germany's generals had cracked a year earlier than their opponents had expected, because they knew the war was lost once America's full weight could be brought to bear. The days of the European political supremacy in world affairs was over. Most of the signatories of the Treaty of Versailles were non-European. The surviving colonial empires were now to be threatened by new nationalist movements. Japan was a victorious great power, too, and much more was to be heard of her demands in the next few years. Finally, European economic strength had been savagely wounded by the war. It was against this unpromising background that the continent appeared to face a grave new threat.

## INSTITUTIONALIZED REVOLUTION

Ever since 1789, some Europeans had hoped for or dreaded popular revolution. The nineteenth century's history could be argued to support both stances, at least at first sight. Between 1821 and 1914 many risings had taken place, assassinations been staged, strikes held, bombs let off: it was a violent age. New political forces - above all, Marxist socialism - were often to be found using revolutionary slogans and sometimes what looked like revolutionary methods. Yet for all this excitement, there had never been a successful popular revolution in a major country. Outbreaks of violence and popular unrest were usually handled without much difficulty by confident regimes. In some countries, a growing liberalism in political

arrangements had provided safety-valves for the expression of anger as well as ways of meeting social grievance. Though some of Europe's rulers feared revolution in 1914, the way their peoples responded to the demands war made on them showed that they need not have done so.

After 1918, things were different. The war had not only badly damaged traditional authority, economic well-being, and shattered the political structures of the old order. For the first time there had come into being a state, a great power, whose rulers, sincerely or not, claimed to seek the overthrow of all existing society and its replacement by a different model. This was the new Russia, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

### *The USSR*

The two men who had done most to win power for the Russian Bolsheviks were Vladimir Ilych Lenin and Leon Trotsky. Before 1914 Lenin taught his party to be a small, highly-disciplined revolutionary elite, ruthlessly purging their ranks of anyone disposed to argue with the decisions of the party's leadership or not accepting its interpretations of the teachings of Karl Marx as truth. The onset of war had sent him into exile, but with the help of the Germans (who were only too anxious to do anything they could to hasten Russia's collapse) he had returned in 1917 after the February revolution. The collapse of the tsarist state owed nothing to the Bolsheviks, but was the work of the German army, which had broken the will of the Russian people to fight. Once returned to Russia, though, Lenin strove to clear the ground for the successful establishment of a Bolshevik-led state on socialist lines.

Lenin conducted a brilliant political campaign to undermine the authority of the new government. The moment to remove it from power came in October. Almost without bloodshed (and largely thanks to the tactics and planning of Trotsky), the Bolsheviks occupied the Winter Palace (the seat of government) and other crucial points in the capital. Though the Congress of 'Soviets', the workers' and soldiers' councils which had sprung up during the summer and were largely dominated by Bolshevik sympathizers, was under their control, the Bolsheviks had to fight hard to survive in the next few months. Trotsky now made his other great contribution to the revolution by organizing and commanding the new 'Red Army' which, though the USSR was forced by the Germans to make a humiliating peace at Brest-Litovsk, nonetheless crushed those who wanted to restore the old regime and fought off the Poles. The use of terror to wipe out or terrify internal opponents was, of course, traditional in Russia; her new rulers did not break with the methods of autocracy at the revolution.

More importantly, the new regime gave the poor of the towns and the peasants what they wanted: peace and land. Its first decree proposed that all warring governments should at once discuss peace terms, without claiming annexations. No other government responded, but this mattered little: it was a signal to Russians as much as to foreigners. The second decree passed by the Congress of Soviets the day after the seizure of the

Winter Palace declared all land to be the property of the people; within a few years over 500 million acres were transferred to the poorer peasants, and the estates of the old landowning class, the Church and the royal family were wiped out. A huge majority of Russians were thus given a stake in keeping the new regime going.

### SURVIVAL

Life in the young USSR was very harsh. The Germans had exacted savage peace terms. Fighting in the civil war was fierce; atrocities were committed and more of the country's feeble economic resources were destroyed. Some parts of the old tsarist empire tried to break away from the new regime; a few (Finland, the Baltic provinces) were successful, others (the Ukraine) were not. Confiscating food from the peasants to feed the towns led to more resistance to the regime and, therefore, more brutal repression. Even some of those who had first supported the Bolsheviks turned against them. At the great naval base of Kronstadt in 1921 a revolt of sailors demanding democratic elections, freedom of speech and the press, and the release of all political prisoners was mercilessly repressed. But it was a risky moment. By 1921, nearly half Russia's whole grain-growing area was out of production. An appalling famine swept through much of southern Russia when the year brought a drought; millions died, and survivors fell back on eating straw from roofs, leather harness, and even on cannibalism.

Lenin decided that concessions had to be made. Producers were given greater freedom to take their goods to market and get market prices for them. Communist diehards disliked it, but it worked. Slowly, the country began to pull round, though not until 1928 did industrial and agricultural production climb back to the level of 1913. Even then, the new Russia was relatively much less powerful than its predecessor had been in 1914 and the economic and technical base of the military power which numbers gave her was still very fragile. Yet a vast change had in fact begun. Russia was again back on the road to modernization she had entered under the tsars.

The revolution had given Russia rulers who, however barbaric in western eyes, were dogmatically sure that history was on their side and that the socialist cause of which they were the vanguard was destined to triumph world-wide. This doctrine, presented as the true interpretation of Karl Marx' teaching, provided an encouraging and powerful myth. Meanwhile, Russians who were not communists could also feel that what they were doing was in the best interests of the fatherland whose potential was indeed vast. The revolution had triumphed in a backward and poverty-stricken land (a fact that did not fit Marxist predictions) but it could become the base of one of the strongest powers on earth.

### *The abbing of revolution*

The Russian revolution and the Bolshevik seizure of power were events in world history. In 1919 there was set up in Moscow a Third Socialist

national, soon known as the 'Comintern'. Its purpose was to organize internationally the 'communist' parties which had appeared in virtually every country where the old socialist parties were blamed first for failing to avert the coming of war in 1914 and then for not promoting revolution. The test of true socialism for Lenin was adherence to the Comintern; in every country, therefore, Marxist socialists soon divided into two camps. One, comprising those now usually called communist parties, looked to Moscow and Russian direction; these became to all intents and purposes the instruments of Soviet international policy. They denounced bitterly and fought with those (many equally sincere in claiming to be Marxist) who remained in the old socialist parties. So, the European 'left' was for decades condemned to division.

The new revolutionary threat looked very frightening to some non-Marxists. Yet it soon faded. A Bolshevik government appeared briefly in Hungary, and there were a few coups by communists in Germany, some briefly successful. Yet though the government of the new republic which had emerged there was dominated politically by socialists, it looked to conservative forces - notably the professional soldiers of the old army - in order to prevent revolution. Communist policy in fact made united resistance to conservatism more difficult, frightening moderates and alienating potential allies on the left. In eastern and central Europe, the social threat was often clearly a national threat and the war did not end there until in March 1921 a peace treaty between Russia and the new Polish Republic provided frontiers which would last until 1939. Poland was the most anti-Russian by tradition, the most anti-Bolshevik by religion, as well as the largest and most ambitious of the new nations. But all of them felt threatened by a recovery of Russian power. This connexion helped to turn many of these states before 1939 to dictatorial or military governments.

### DEMOCRATIC DIFFICULTIES

If the world of conservatives and revolutionaries had been transformed by the Great War, so had that of liberals and democrats. On the one hand, high hopes were awoken by the appearance of democratic constitutions in many places where they had never been seen before. On the other were alarming social and economic realities. By 1918 conditions in many big European cities were harrowing as a result of blockade. A large tract of France had been blighted and ravaged by fencer fighting than any seen before; whole towns had been reduced to rubble and villages expunged from the map. In eastern Europe physical devastation was less intense, but there had been less to destroy in the first place. Everywhere sowing and harvesting had been interrupted again and again. Europe's grain-growers, though, could not have fed the starving cities even if they had the seed-corn and even if the labour to sow it and reap the first post-war harvest had been available, because often there were no railways.

All European countries, too, had spent savings and money which ought to have been ploughed back into investment; they had produced less during the war because labour had been taken from farm and factory to serve in the armies. Between 1913 and 1920 Europe's manufacturing output went down by almost a quarter. Germany had been Europe's greatest prewar industrial power, but after Versailles the need to make what were called 'reparations' payments to the Allies stood in the way of her recovery. Russia, now Bolshevik, neither could nor would play her pre-war part in the smooth working of the European economy as a customer for manufactures and capital, and as a supplier of grain. The economic unity which the Habsburg monarchy had given to much of the Danube valley had gone. New political frontiers cut old economic links. Some of the new states were economically so crippled that they dared not even allow their rolling-stock to cross frontiers in case it should not come back. Much of eastern Europe starved through the first winter after the war. Soldiers returned to find no jobs and children and old folk likely to die from disease or malnutrition. As if this were not enough, in 1919 one of the last great world epidemics reached its peak. A wave of influenza killed more people than the Great War itself (somewhere between five and ten million in Europe alone).

Many 'new' states (including Germany) had to make their first experiments with democracy in these appalling conditions. Two existing constitutional monarchies, Great Britain and Italy, widened their electorates to include all adult males and some British women were given the vote in 1918 (and all of them in 1929). The League tried to assist civilized politics by taking up the rights of minorities, guaranteed in some of the peace treaties (for example, that with Poland) and a number of questions left over from the peace negotiations at Versailles were settled by 'plebiscites'—that is, by direct votes of the people in the area concerned. All this added up to an expansion of formal democracy. Yet this was by no means the whole story. Democratic government in Russia had been swiftly swept aside by the Bolsheviks, who dissolved the only freely elected Constituent Assembly Russia had ever had shortly after seizing power. In eastern and central Europe old-fashioned conservatives who hated republicans, democrats and socialists alike, and regretted the passing of the old empires were helped by fears of Bolshevik-inspired revolution to put dictators and 'strong men' in power. Another threat to democracy came from those who lost by it. Many did not like plebiscites which left them living under alien rule. Some, in the defeated states (above all, Germany) complained that the Allies talked a lot about democracy, but would not let their former enemies run their own affairs without interference, and crippled their economies by demands for reparations.

### *Fascism*

In Italy an anti-democratic movement took power in the 1920s which gave politics a new term—'fascism'. It was supported and promoted by

Italians who sought to win support by terrorizing their opponents, advertising their strength and ruthlessness, and recommending the adoption of tough, authoritarian measures to solve Italy's problems. Although Italy had been on the winning side, many Italians felt bitter that she had not got more out of the peace settlement. Their patriotic feelings were exploited by the Fascists, who blamed Italy's constitutional government and democratic allies for the betrayal of the country. In proportion to Italy's numbers and wealth her casualties had been heavy. Grave damage had been done to her economy, which had never been strong. After the war inflation had ruined people in all ranks of society, and the plight of the poor grew worse. Prices soared and they could not buy food, while unemployment plagued the cities. Though some Italians turned to socialism and communism, fear of revolution drove many others into the arms of the Fascists.

By 1922, there were several Fascist members of parliament and in many Italian towns the Fascists had used violence to turn out communist local authorities, and had broken up the offices of trades unions and socialist newspapers. The existing government could not (or would not) maintain law and order, and in many places a majority of Italians seemed willing to let the Fascists do what they liked. Their undisputed leader was a former socialist journalist called Benito Mussolini. He had a bombastic, bullying style and was something of a virtuoso as an orator and public relations expert, though it is now hard to see why he was so successful. Mussolini succeeded in bluffing the king into dismissing the government of the day and letting him form a new one with members of other parties in it. Once installed at the levers of government, he then used them to bring about fundamental changes, step by step. Dictatorship was only gradually imposed, but in 1925 the old liberal constitution of 1861 itself was set aside and democratic parliamentarianism came to an end. Soon, opponents of the regime were being rounded up; a few were murdered. Mussolini's regime was not as brutal as the Bolshevik one he admired, but it was bad enough. And for all its claims to solve Italy's problems by dynamic and vigorous action, it did nothing of the kind.

### *A drift to authoritarianism*

Not only Soviet Russia and Fascist Italy had turned their backs on democracy by 1930. Lithuania and Yugoslavia had both by then become dictatorships, and Czechoslovakia was the only one of the 'new' states of 1918 to retain its democratic constitution twenty years later. Bulgaria, Romania and Greece (of the pre-1914 constitutional states) had all by 1938 passed into the hands of generals or authoritarian monarchs, and, at the other end of Europe, Portugal was ruled by a very authoritarian regime, while the democratic republic of Spain was being throttled by one of its generals, Francisco Franco. There is no single explanation of democracy's sickness. Economic hardship, fears of communism, and violent nationalism all helped undermine it, as well as the minorities and the

frontier grievances left over from 1919. Only in a few western and Scandinavian countries were enough people familiar with the traditions needed to make democracy work. In one or two countries where there were old clerical and secular power rivalries, Catholics, too, often saw democracy and liberalism as enemies of the Roman Church. It is not really surprising, therefore, that over much of Europe democracy soon showed that its potential had been exaggerated in the euphoric days of Wilsonian rhetoric and aspiration.

#### Weimar Germany

Yet ten years after the war some liberals still felt optimistic. A recovery of prosperity had helped, above all in Germany. The 'Weimar republic' (Weimar was the town where its constitution was drawn up) had started under big handicaps. To many German patriots, the republic was an affront from the start: it only existed at all because Germany had been defeated. It had signed the peace terms (and would always be blamed for them), it had been born in revolution. It then faced awful practical problems.

The socialist politicians of the new government set out to give the new Germany a democratic and liberal constitution but were at once deserted by those who should have been their allies but who wanted, instead, a revolutionary republic based on workers' and soldiers' councils (rather like the Russian Soviets). For a few months the issue hung in the balance: in the end the army put down the radicals. By then the German Communist Party (KPD), looking to Moscow for leadership, had emerged as a rival of the old Social Democratic Party (SPD). The Weimar republic had now to fight off old-fashioned monarchists on the right, and communists on the left. The Allies meanwhile made things worse by their harsh peace terms.

Though they brought the end of the blockade in July 1919, they were bitterly resented. 'Versailles' was soon blamed for an appalling inflation. Money lost its value at a staggering rate: prices rose by a multiple of about 1,000,000,000 between 1918 and 1923. This helped to turn the saving classes against the republic, which they believed to be dominated by Marxists.

A turning-point came in 1924 when a big international loan then opened the way to stabilizing the currency. Spectacular economic recovery followed in the next few years. Statesmen and economists elsewhere had come to see that Germany, with her large population, huge reserves of skill, ingenuity, organizing capacity, natural resources, industrial plant and high level of culture, simply could not but play a major part in Europe's life. A question followed from this which still remained to be answered: was it also not true that with so many strengths to build on, together with a strategic position at the heart of Europe, an unrivalled military tradition and strong national feeling, Germany was bound to play a big, and perhaps a dominating political role as a European great power?

This was the German problem which dominated European diplomacy between 1918 and 1939.

With prosperity, the republic looked safer. The dangers of revolution and violence faded away – or seemed to do so. Weimar Germany flourished, a free, democratic society, admired abroad because of the vigorous artistic, scientific and scholarly life which went on there. Its constitution guaranteed fundamental rights: its supreme court upheld them. Its elections gave support to coalition governments anxious to maintain the constitution. Yet many Germans remained unreconciled to it. The KPD steadily and bitterly attacked the SPD which upheld it. Nationalist groups and conservatives looked back with regret to the great days of Bismarck when Germany dominated Europe (or seemed to). They also appealed to a new, mass nationalism which wanted to submerge internal differences in a more-or-less tribal belief in the German 'Folk' (*Volk*). True, the treaty of Versailles was being whittled away as the 1920s went on – by, for instance, an easing of the reparations. A new treaty at Locarno between the main European states in 1925 to which Germany freely acceded seemed to mean an end to quarrels in the West. But still the lands lost by Germany in the East and the fate of people of German blood in the new states of central Europe excited nationalist anger.

#### Adolf Hitler

Such ideas were to be exploited by one of the few men who unquestionably shaped the course of modern history, largely for ill: Adolf Hitler. He was an Austrian. After an unhappy early life he found psychological release and contentment in the Great War, and was a good soldier, twice decorated. Defeat was a bitter experience. He was to devote the rest of his life to changing the verdict of 1918. In the early 1920s he became a nationalist agitator, denouncing Versailles. He took part in an attempt to overthrow the local Bavarian government in 1923 as a prelude to marching on Berlin. This failed and he was locked up for a time. But he continued to write and to write. His rambling political tract, *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), was written in prison; it contains a mish-mash of Darwinian notions of natural selection by struggle, anti-Semitism, admiration for a German medieval empire which had never really existed, and so on. Hitler soon had a small following, the National Socialist German Workers' Party, whose members were called 'Nazis' for short.

Prosperity in the later 1920s helped to hold Nazis and other extremists in check. They could do little except preach their vague but violent views and brawl with their opponents, denouncing the Versailles peace and claiming that all Germans should be united in one nation-state which would acquire new lands for the *Volk* in the East. They called for a crusade against Germany's enemies, in particular, against Marxists and Jews. Some of these ideas had roots deep in German culture and proved very appealing. But the Nazis also had a modern look: they talked social revolution and totally and completely rejected liberal democracy. For a long time many

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## Introduction

During the second world war two types of warfare were waged. The first ranged the vast regular armies of the two sides against each other: while hostilities were in progress it monopolised the communiqés; everyone was convinced that its outcome would decide the future of the world. The second was fought in the darkness of the underground: in a desperate effort, apparently doomed to failure by the disparity of forces, the vanquished and occupied peoples rose against their conquerors and oppressors. Not until liberation did the existence of this clash become partially known; even today it is still shrouded in some mystery and is shot through with myth and legend.

On the Allied side these two parts of a single whole were as different as night from day. On occasion, moreover, they followed differing paths, at best running parallel: in China, Chiang Kai-shek's troops looked down on those of Mao Tse-tung; in France the clandestine organisation which sprang from the Armistice Army long kept itself to itself. Sometimes mutual distrust, to some extent inherent in the situation, even produced definite hostility: Rokossovsky's army remained inactive on the banks of the Vistula until the flames of the Warsaw rising were extinguished. In most cases, fortunately, co-ordination was achieved and in some it was of great symbolic significance; in Corsica, for instance, a 'shock battalion' arriving from Algiers combined with the local *magnis* to throw the occupiers into the sea. But integration invariably came late in the day and was an uneasy process. In all countries regular officers showed a certain scorn and no small lack of understanding of the 'little war'; on their side the underground fighters considered that the traditional rules of war did not apply to, indeed were at variance with, the specialised nature of the warfare on which they were engaged.

The fact was that, whatever their numbers, whatever the quantity and efficiency of the weapons they used, whatever the country

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or régime they served, the regular armies of the second world war were, from the qualitative point of view, waging warfare similar to that of their predecessors. On both sides and in all theatres of war they were directed by staffs receiving directives from the governments they served; they fought without seeking to change the machinery of state, the administration, the economy or diplomatic usage; they merely made use of these things in order to harness every effort towards the attainment of a single goal - victory. Their battles on the ground formed part of broad strategic concepts in which visions of the political future combined with short-term military objectives and were sometimes even the governing factor. Battles were fought on a well-tryed pattern: invariably the object was to assemble forces superior to those of the enemy, to engage them wisely at the right place and the most favourable moment in order to annihilate or capture the enemy's forces, to conquer his territory and dictate an armistice to him. Once the play was over, the curtain would fall and an interval of peace ensue.

In this traditional form of warfare every precaution is taken to ensure that the opposing forces can recognise each other. In principle, they fight according to the 'rules of war' which guarantee a minimum of protection to civilians, occupied peoples or prisoners of war. In general terms the opposing units are similarly organised, their dispositions are comparable, they are subject to an identical hierarchy and a major factor in their strength is the discipline of their members. Every man can therefore fight his enemy to the death while at the same time respecting him because he sees in him a counterpart to himself. The average soldier worries little about what his enemy is thinking or the ideology which inspires him - before the Normandy landing Patton told his subordinates that the problems of fascism and democracy were no more important than the electoral battles periodically fought by Republicans and Democrats in the United States. In short, soldiers in regular armies want to be no more than technicians of war pursuing their trade to the best of their ability.

The 'little war', the clandestine war, had its place in the 'big war'. From the 'big war' it drew its strength and its hope; it mirrored the Allied cleavages - the counterpart to the Anglo-American/Soviet alliance with all its arguments and misunderstandings was the co-operation, sometimes tinged with drama, between com-

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munist and nationalists. Yet it was something quite different; its aims were different and its methods were its own. Its troops, for instance, were haphazardly raised; their arms were always inadequate and their training left much to be desired. They could not, therefore, deliver a frontal attack; they could not hope to engage in a decisive battle; they could not have a strategy and they could only embark on tactical operations. In their weakness they were often forced to refuse battle, to vanish when the threat was too great and to reappear at a different place and time when conditions had again become more favourable. When von Paulus' Sixth German Army was surrounded and made prisoner at Stalingrad, its war was over and it departed into captivity; when the guerrillas were crushed at the Vercors or in the Auvergne in July 1944, guerrilla warfare flared up again in August. Clandestine warfare knows no armistice or cessation of hostilities; it lights fires which are never extinguished; its embers may even flare again after the major war is over - as happened in Greece.

The clandestine warrior harbours no great vision that one day he will carry the war into the enemy's country; he is fighting on his own territory, while his country's armies have either been beaten or are fighting far away, perhaps overseas. Of course he is fighting the invader, but he is also fighting those friends whom the invader may have been able to recruit. There are two sides to the war of resistance: it is both a foreign and an internal war; as such it may have to paralyse the administration, sabotage the economy and destroy the communications of its own country to prevent the enemy from using them.

As a result, clandestine warfare does not obey the 'rules' of conventional war: it is not 'chivalrous'; sometimes it must even use 'unfair' methods. It does not, for instance, allow itself the luxury of keeping prisoners; it punishes 'traitors' severely, without trial, sometimes without verifying that treason has been committed. Equally, to fight it, the occupying power makes use less of his regular forces than of specially-trained units formed into an organ of repression whose favourite weapon is merciless cruelty. One side uses assassination, sabotage and surprise attack to which the other replies with torture, shootings, summary executions and the destruction of farms and villages. Both work more or less according to the motto 'If it's not you, it's your brother'; insecurity is answered by terror. Clandestine warfare therefore soon assumes a character of implacability - fires raging, prisoners screaming

under 'questioning', weeping hostages being marched off in chains. It ends only in the pale dawn with the firing squad at work or in the smoke of the concentration camp crematoria; even then the end is only temporary, for 'when a comrade falls, a comrade takes his place', emerging full of resolution from the inexhaustible reservoir provided by an entire population of accomplices. A regular army invariably lives somewhat apart from the population; the men of the *magnis* and the partisans must be immersed in it 'like the fish in water'.

Since he is a volunteer obeying solely his own impulses, the clandestine fighter spurns the ritual associated with professional armies - discipline, external marks of respect, uniform, ranks, unquestioning obedience. He challenges the leader in whom he has no confidence; he insists on his right to demobilise himself at the moment of his choosing. Most important of all, he never separates his actions as a fighter from his views as a citizen. The war he wages is ideological as much as national; it will not necessarily end when the occupying power has been beaten and driven out, because the political aims which he desires must be achieved as well.

These are some of the characteristics peculiar to clandestine warfare; they are to be found in the past in the actions of the Chouans in France, of the Gueux in the Netherlands, the carbonari, the Polish revolts of 1863, the Spanish guerrillas of 1809, the Russian peasants of 1812 and the French francs-tireurs of 1871. None of these earlier stories had really been studied; people knew of them as part of popular mythology, but the lessons to be drawn from them often seemed obscure. Occupied peoples who had apparently resigned themselves to slavery seemed one day to have recovered their freedom without bloodshed - like the Czechs three centuries after they had been crushed at the White Mountain. These memories of the past, often a distant past, provided food for thought and for propaganda, but they hardly produced any direct guidance for action.

If any general rule was deducible, it was that in most cases the revolting peoples had been easily crushed if left to themselves - for instance, Vercingetorix at Alesia, the Spaniards under the Moors or the Italians charging the Austrians with the proud motto *Italia farà da se*. Conversely, the majority of peoples who had recovered their independence had done so with the aid of

powerful foreign support: the Irish had been upheld by the large numbers of their fellow countrymen who had emigrated to the United States; the Kingdom of Sardinia had been supported by Napoleon III, the Belgians by Louis-Philippe; it had taken a world war to create or revive the Polish, Finnish, Czechoslovak and Yugoslav states.

But history never deals its cards the same way twice; between 1939 and 1945 occupied Europe was in a situation without parallel or precedent. In the first place the extent of the occupation was unparalleled; it stretched from Finistère to the Volga, from the North Cape to Cape Matapan. Secondly, the occupying power was no mere conqueror and looter; nor was he satisfied with re-drawing the map and departing once his ambitions were fulfilled. He had a doctrine, and a philosophy which he intended to impose; he believed in the superiority of his race and he made no secret of the fact that, because they had been beaten, the occupied peoples would be turned into slaves and a whole hierarchy of enslavement instituted. Any tendency to show pity, generosity or indulgence he regarded as a sign of weakness.

Faced with this terrible enemy resistance could not apply any of the lessons which it might have learnt from the past. It had to think out from the beginning its objectives, its methods of warfare and the weapons it would use. On the other hand, it did have one advantage over its predecessors: it could benefit from a technique born of the progress of science and applicable primarily to communications and liaison. We shall be dealing later with its development and employment. This was to extricate the Resistance from its isolation and give it its niche in the great Allied coalition.

Although 'British resistance' and 'Soviet resistance' are current phrases, we shall obviously not deal with the former - the Channel Islands were the only parts of Great Britain to be occupied. As far as the latter is concerned, we shall not tell the story of the battles fought by the Red Army but only of those fought by the inhabitants of the occupied areas of the USSR. The first characteristic common to resistance throughout Europe is that it was a *partiotic struggle to liberate national territory*; this was as much the overriding object of the Dutch as it was of the Czechs or the Byelorussians; this was the aim which led many Frenchmen or Poles to forget their peacetime differences and co-operate in the

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same battle on which their freedom and the future of them all depended.

But the second world war was not a repetition of the first. The occupier was not the enemy armed forces alone; he did not manifest his presence solely through the location of his armies. In his baggage train he brought a doctrine and a political régime which he intended to impose and perpetuate, and both had their formidable acolytes, the SS and Gestapo. Mussolini had announced that 'the twentieth century would be fascist' and Hitler had proclaimed that he would construct a 'Thousand-Year Reich'. Experience proved, however, that fascism, and even more nazism, was as fundamental a negation of a western civilisation founded on humanism, Christian morals and the liberalism of an enlightened century as it was of communist democracy, the *raison d'être* of which was the advancement of the working classes. As well as being a patriotic struggle, therefore, the Resistance was also an *ideological struggle for the dignity of man*; on this basis it was possible for Catholics, communists and liberal agnostics all to find themselves in the same camp – something which would have been unthinkable before the war.

If these two axioms be accepted, it is clear that all those who took the side of nazi Germany during the war were by definition enemies of the Resistance; this was clearly so in the case of the 'collaborators' whose existence added a third dimension to the resistance problem, that of *civil war*. At first sight some of the puppet régimes which attempted to sit on the fence, or even to remain neutral, can hardly be included in this category; examples are Admiral Horthy's government in Hungary and, above all, the Vichy régime in unoccupied France. Gradually, however, they lost all freedom of action and were forced either to submit or to resign. Those who submitted became enemies of the Resistance and sometimes its principal targets because they were the easiest to hit.

Having studied the subject for some twenty years, it seemed to me not impossible to grasp, explain and characterise as a whole the historical phenomenon of the 'shadow war'. I make no attempt to tell the whole story, however, as differences between countries and periods are so great that areas of obscurity remain which research cannot unravel and a catalogue of actions of similar type would be both monotonous and pointless.

What first strikes the historian is the extreme variety of the

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clandestine struggle, its mobility and the fact that it resolves itself into a host of small-scale actions. Each national Resistance had its own peculiar characteristics which depended on the attitude of the occupying power, the nature of the country, the assistance provided by the Allies and the country's strategic importance.

Only in rare cases was the Resistance homogeneous. As with the great coalition of which it was a small segment, the components of European resistance varied, and were sometimes even hostile to each other. The differing motives, groupings, methods and objectives produced a highly complex pattern: within the *Council National de la Résistance* [National Resistance Council – CNR] in France, representatives of the communists, the socialists, the Christian democrats, the right-wing parties and the syndicalists were living and working side by side; the French Forces of the Interior were formed by a theoretical merger of the communist *Francs-Tireurs Partisans* with the Secret Army (Gaullist) and the Armistice Army (Vichy). So explosive a mixture inevitably produced clashes, friction and upheavals.

Nevertheless, despite its extreme diversity, its antagonisms and its differing organisations, the Resistance basically acted in unison: it was fighting a common enemy; the weapons it used were the same; its sufferings were similar and its development followed an almost identical pattern. Because of this, I have attempted to survey the general evolution of resistance in Europe; in broad terms it seems to me to be the same in all countries. I shall only be able to make certain cursory allusions, however, to events outside Europe.

In the first place it seemed necessary to place resistance in the context of German or Italian occupation. Resistance had to fight the enemy's friends, in other words the collaborators; though not without misunderstandings it frequently benefited from the support of foreign governments or groups of its fellow countrymen in exile. It had to fit its own struggle into the framework of that of the major Allies, sometimes to its disadvantage and at the price of terrible dramas.

Resistance everywhere arose from a spirit of rejection – rejection of defeat, of the political régimes created or tolerated by the occupying power, of collaboration with the victor. At first it took the form of small gestures – passage of information, malicious humour, acts of solidarity, propaganda. In its early days the Allies were indifferent to it; it suffered from an inherent weakness

which made it permanently precarious; it was ineffective owing to lack of weapons, money, cadres, experience and targets with which it could deal. This was the phase of *refusal to submit* as dictated by the conscience of each individual. The various social, political and religious groupings did not all react similarly; as a general rule each man made his own lonely choice, without too much regard for the lessons of the past.

A distinctive development followed, more often than not under the impulse of certain unifying forces such as repressive action on the part of the occupying power, establishment of contact with external forces or the action of political parties, primarily of the communist party. As the overall course of the war led to a rebirth of hope, individual initiatives and the little groups which had sprung from them tended to coalesce: the occasional pamphlet turned into a periodical newspaper; safe houses for prisoners on the run were linked to form escape lines; the collection of intelligence was systematised and channelled into regular 'offices'; official organisations and the various strata of society were penetrated. This was the *organisation* phase.

During this phase, by an expensive process of trial and error, the Resistance worked out its methods. It learnt how to select its objectives and adopt tactics to suit them; it gained experience by demonstrations, strikes, sabotage and assassinations. Then it blossomed into armed groups in town or country, frequently subordinate to a single headquarters; these were the partisans or *maquis* and they constituted a force which ultimately attracted the attention of the major Allies and was given its equipment by them. Thus the Resistance worked out its methods and went into *battle*.

This was a drama of hundreds of different scenes ranging from conspiracy to revolt, from indiscipline to desertion, from the hit-and-run raid to the large-scale battle. Everywhere, however, the goal was the same - a *national rising* in which every inhabitant of the country would participate, each in his appointed place. At this stage the Resistance became a major factor; it was able to attack the occupying power, to make a definite impression on him, even to demoralise him; it was unwilling to be ordered about by the Allies; it acquired both a military doctrine and a political viewpoint and it sometimes even worked out ambitious plans for the post-war period. It became a clandestine state, identifying itself with the nation and preparing itself to gather up the reins of

power on liberation. But it did not invariably do so without internecine strife.

These phases did not, of course, develop all over Europe at the same tempo; their duration and intensity varied and they did not necessarily follow each other but often overlapped. Nevertheless, whether fast or slow, whether hindered or assisted by the context in which it took place, in its general form the evolution of resistance throughout occupied Europe was uniform. Chained, gagged and tortured though it was, an identical 'Shadow Army' rose everywhere to wage a constantly changing war and drive the occupier from every country conquered by his armies. This force made its contribution to and played its part in the common victory. Viewed as a whole, this was a truly extraordinary development, in many ways unprecedented. Its importance and its influence, should not be underestimated; it has a lesson to teach, especially to the colonial empires and, more generally, to the 'third world': in the era of 'press-button warfare' and nuclear holocaust there is not a conflict in the world today in which the 'little war' of guerrilla warfare will not assuredly find its place.

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anti-Nazi resistance, and in particular on its attempt to assassinate Hitler in July 1944.<sup>6</sup> Even with these caveats, however, the book's geographical scope is vast. The development, conduct and effectiveness of the resistance movements that this book examines were shaped by manifold forces: the form that the Axis occupation took and the impact it went on to have upon the occupied populations; the social and economic character and the physical environment of the occupied territories; relations between the resistance and its sponsors abroad, be they the main Allied powers or the various governments-in-exile, and the practical and organizational support those parties proffered to the resistance; the response to resistance, often brutal though sometimes relatively restrained, of the Axis occupiers; relations between resistance and population, as well as between occupiers and population, on the ground; and relations – whether constructive or hostile – between the resistance groups themselves. This introduction sets the scene by briefly surveying all six of these forces.

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The impact of occupation upon European populations ranged, generally speaking, from the rather bleak to the truly devastating. Much of the cause of this was ideological. Most far-reaching in their ideological effects were the National Socialist principles which underpinned so much of German occupation policy. Nazi ideology ordered the populations of occupied Europe in accordance with what the Nazis perceived to be their racial 'superiority' and 'inferiority'. Bottom of the pile in Nazi eyes, and earmarked within a remarkably short space of time for outright extermination, were the Jews of occupied Europe. One level up from the Jews in the Nazis' warped scheme of things was the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, albeit with certain gradations. The occupation policies that were inflicted upon many of the Slavic regions of occupied Europe, and above all upon Poland, invoked ideological justification for the brutal terror, economic rapacity and cultural destruction that they meted out. Yet it was not only German occupation that was shaped by ideology. Both Germany's main European ally Italy, and the various countries among the European Axis satellites, also maintained an ideologically influenced conception of how they should rule the territories allocated to them following the initial wave of Axis victories. Italy, to take just one example, sought to impose a soon to be bitterly resented policy of cultural assimilation upon much of the Balkan territory which it was allotted following the Axis conquest of Greece and Yugoslavia in spring 1941. Thus did ideology play a significant part in determining both the conditions that provoked the growth of resistance in the first place, and the levels of anti-Axis support that resistance movements eventually went on to accrue.

So too did the economic pressures to which the increasingly rapacious Axis occupation regime subjected Europe as the war went on. Economic demands upon occupied Europe grew especially acute as the might of the new Allied coalition of Great Britain and her empire, the Soviet Union and the United States increasingly tilted the balance against the Axis from 1942 onward. The pressures placed upon occupied civilians to provide food and other economic resources for

Cook & Shephard, Hitler's Europe Ablaze

an ever more desperate war effort eventually alienated them so extensively as to stymie any attempts at conciliatory occupation policy which the Axis continued to make. The stakest effect, set increasingly in train from 1942 onward, was a swelling of support for and indeed active participation in the resistance, caused by the thousands of men and women seeking to evade the ever more voracious German labour draft. The economic pressures, and the concomitant swelling of resistance support, were felt not just among those Eastern European populations that Nazi racial thinking already deemed worthy of slavery. They were felt also among Western European populations, most prominently that of France, whose treatment at the hands of the occupiers had on the whole been hitherto comparatively mild.

From 1942 in particular, then, resistance across occupied Europe was an active and burgeoning phenomenon. The historian Henri Michel identified no fewer than ten forms that resistance across Axis-occupied Europe assumed during the Second World War: passive resistance; go-slow by workers; strikes; secret tracts and newspapers; escape lines for Allied airmen; information-gathering; sabotage; assassination; *maquis*<sup>7</sup> and guerrilla warfare; and particularly towards the war's end, the emergence, successful or otherwise, of full-scale liberation movements.<sup>8</sup> Yet, as the chapters in this book demonstrate, different resistance movements were compelled by their various strengths and weaknesses to employ different combinations of these tactics.

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In much of Europe it was not just the increasing harshness of Axis rule that encouraged resistance; the fact that numerous countries retained age-old traditions of resistance to foreign invaders helped lay the groundwork also. Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece and the Soviet Union in particular had all been the scene of such struggles in centuries past. Within two additional occupied countries, France and Belgium, such traditions had not taken root quite so deeply. But more recent decades had seen these two countries also take up resistance against foreign occupiers. The historical resonance of those particular struggles was intensified by the fact that on both occasions – the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1, and the First World War – the occupiers in question had been German.

Beyond that, the form that resistance took in different parts of Europe was greatly influenced by the social, economic and geographical character of the areas in which it operated. In relatively advanced, urbanized Western Europe, and in the Czech lands and Poland also, such was the level of economic, technological and communicational infrastructure that resistance movements were able to engage relatively easily in covert types of activity, such as publishing secret newspapers, running escape lines for Allied airmen, information-gathering, and sabotage. But if their regions' relatively developed infrastructure facilitated such tactics, the topographical character of those same regions *compelled* such tactics. For the numerous urban centres that dotted these countries, the superior transport infrastructure that connected them, the often flat and open terrain within which they were situated, and the often limited geographical space in which

resistance groups could operate, all meant that visibly larger and more spectacular shows of resistance were much easier for the occupier to crush.

But in the Soviet Union, Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy and, albeit less widely, France and Belgium, the topography lent itself to a very different kind of resistance. Such was the extent of forest, swamp and mountain range in these countries that many resistance movements there rapidly assumed the specific character of *guerrilla* movements. Such terrain was often both remote and impenetrable; it was therefore ideal ground for mobile irregular units, comprising not just armed civilians but also groups of fugitive soldiers, which operated across country to sabotage the occupier's communication and supply lines, terrorize its troops with hit-and-run tactics and generally harass all its efforts to administer and exploit its territory effectively. The guerrillas operating in occupied Europe during the Second World War are referred to more specifically as *partisans*.

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Many of the partisan movements operating in occupied Europe during the Second World War were affiliated to regular armed forces seeking to re-establish democratic government. The regular forces in question were those of the Western Allies, the Soviet Union and, albeit much less extensively, the various governments-in-exile of the occupied European countries. The significance of each party's contribution to the resistance – be it partisan-type movements or other types of resistance – varied across countries. The Soviet Union, for instance, was swifter to provide meaningful practical and organizational support to the partisan movement on its own occupied soil than were the Western Allies to provide such support to resistance elsewhere in occupied Europe. This was partly because, by late 1942, the Soviet High Command regarded the partisan campaign as an important, if relatively small, complement to its conventional war effort. It also regarded it as an important means by which it could retain some degree of practical and political control over that part of the Soviet population that was penned in behind Axis lines.

Whatever kinds of action the different resistance movements engaged in, however, one thing they did have in common – save in the final months of occupation, and on isolated occasions before that – was that they soon abandoned any pretension of liberating themselves by means of a national popular uprising. British hopes for such uprisings, and their potential for fatally undermining the German war effort more generally, were loudly expressed by Churchill in the dog days after the Fall of France in June 1940. The means by which he sought to transform hope into reality was by utilizing the organization of the newly formed Special Operations Executive (SOE) to support the development of indigenous 'secret armies' which would covertly build their strength and then rise up to overthrow the German occupiers with limited British support. Yet such were the material shortcomings of both the British and the European resistance, and the practical impossibility of secretly organizing the latter on the necessary scale, that the idea of defeating Germany in this way was not even remotely feasible. An early occasion on which a large popular uprising was attempted, by the Serbs of Yugoslavia in

summer 1941, merely had the effect of sparking a ferocious German reprisal campaign which was instrumental in crushing the revolt by the end of the year.

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How the Axis responded to the threat of resistance was, of course, a further crucial factor in its development. And though the Axis response was not always brutal, it more often than not *was* brutal.<sup>9</sup> Hostage-taking and reprisals in response to guerrilla-style action have been a commonplace aspect of counter-insurgency campaigns.<sup>10</sup> Such campaigns operate on the principle that a population whose loyalties are torn, for whatever reasons of pragmatism or inclination, between insurgents and occupiers is even more likely to plump for the latter if threatened with sanctions for *not* doing so, as well as enticed with rewards for doing so. Even so, the Axis campaign against the European resistance, particularly albeit not exclusively the *German* campaign, very often displayed an especially marked proclivity for terror. In their Eastern European territories in particular, the Germans' profoundly coercive approach corresponded with the racially based contempt with which the Nazis regarded the populations of those regions, and with the Reich's aim of subjecting them to ruthless economic exploitation and cultural subjugation. Indeed, the German occupiers employed selective terror in such territories from the outset, irrespective of whether the population showed signs of actual resistance. For instance, leadership groups such as clerics and army officers in Poland, communist functionaries in the Soviet Union, or the intelligentsia in both, were identified as ideological enemies and potential nuclei of future resistance, and singled out for liquidation even before the Germans invaded. But as resistance grew across occupied Europe, German terror tactics became more commonplace throughout the Continent.

The composition of the personnel whom the Axis deployed against the resistance differed from country to country. The Germans utilized varying numbers of their own army, SS and police personnel. However, such was the size of German-occupied Europe, and such also was the German military's particular preoccupation with the 'cutting edge' operational aspects of warfare at the expense of more humdrum concerns such as military occupation, that German forces were often deployed in insufficient numbers against the resistance. And frequently, the *quality* of the army personnel, at any rate, whom the Germans earmarked for the task left much to be desired also. The deficiencies among the personnel whom the Germans' Axis allies committed to the anti-resistance effort were usually even greater. One outcome of this state of affairs was that by far the greatest contingent of manpower whom the Axis eventually deployed against resistance was home-grown – be it pro-Axis collaborationist militia, or indigenous police personnel of collaborationist or merely apolitical bent. Among collaborationist elements the Axis also sought to establish extensive informer networks.

The active measures that the Axis employed to deter or quell resistance included mass shootings of civilians and destruction of purportedly 'pro-bandit' villages, particularly in Eastern and Southern Europe. Against partisan move-

ments, the Axis – especially the Germans – also employed aggressive mobile patrols, static security measures and, where necessary, major sweeps involving large numbers of troops and sometimes armour and air power also. All too often, however, such sweeps employed troops that were too low in quality and quantity actually to locate and destroy significant partisan concentrations. Instead, they terrorized and killed tens of thousands of civilians who purportedly were aiding the 'bandits'. And across occupied Europe, ever greater numbers of Jews, viewed in Nazi thinking not only as racially inferior but also as a security threat, fell victim to the security campaign too. In this way, the security campaign became intertwined with the vast programme of persecution and killing which eventually mushroomed into the 'Final Solution' of the 'problem' of European Jewry.

In much of Europe, the Axis practice of terror clearly had a quietening effect upon the propensity of occupied populations to resist. The fact that the resistance across much of occupied Europe failed to develop into truly mass movements until the final months of the war, if at all, testifies to the effectiveness of brutal Axis measures. However, because the Axis often lacked suitable manpower on the ground, such terror was not always effective in cowing civilians into submission. Indeed, in regions such as the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, where particularly numerous partisan groups were often a much more frequent everyday presence among the population, indiscriminate Axis terror simply alienated the population and drove it still more surely into the arms of the partisans. And public indignation at the persecution of the Jews, whether or not such persecution was intertwined with the Axis security campaign, could sometimes fuel resistance also. Nowhere was this more so than in Denmark, the country that enjoys the best record of all occupied Europe for helping Jews evade capture during the Holocaust.

Nevertheless, particularly but not exclusively in Western Europe, the Germans and their Axis allies often employed conciliatory measures also in their security campaign. Sometimes the measures were specific, such as pledges to treat captured partisans as prisoners of war instead of shooting them. Sometimes they were more all-encompassing, such as the various social, political and economic initiatives that were part and parcel of hearts and minds campaigns. Many of these measures were born of grander ideas, harboured by some Nazi officials, for a programme of partnership, albeit unequal partnership, between the Reich and the countries of occupied Western Europe.

Yet such constructive initiatives were debilitated by the increasingly rapacious economic needs of the Axis, and by the ongoing tendency of many German officials to view much of the occupied population through racial blinkers and rely excessively on terror. And none of this is to mention the massively destabilizing effects of the actions of some of Germany's allies. This is exemplified most harrowingly by the barbarism that the fascist Ustaša regime of the so-called Independent State of Croatia inflicted upon its country's Serbian population during 1941–2.

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All this, of course, reflects the importance to both resisters and occupiers of the fifth factor that was in play: the co-operation, whether willing or not, of the population caught in the middle of the conflict. Civilian populations, after all, constitute a vital source of food, shelter, intelligence, recruits and other practical help for insurgents. Securing that source, or – in the case of the occupiers – depriving insurgents of it, is therefore essential to the success of either side. And given that the Axis itself could be capable of more conciliatory conduct, the resistance could ill-afford to assume that it enjoyed the population's automatic support. Indeed, Mao Tse-tung himself – a man particularly qualified to comment, given his leadership of the especially vast insurgency that eventually brought all China under communist control in 1949 – maintained that insurgents had to display orderly behaviour, and offer attractive social, economic and practical measures, if they were to enlist the population's co-operation effectively.

Most fundamentally, the essence of relations between resistance and population was such that the population's willing cooperation was not automatically assured. For a population caught between resistance forces and occupation forces needed to make calculations, on an often daily basis, as to which side to support actively, or at least placate, the better to ensure its own survival. Indeed, despite all the wartime hardships to which the Axis occupation subjected European civilians, the majority sought not so much to resist the occupation as to keep their heads down and survive from day to day. Over time, as the Axis occupation grew ever harsher and more exploitative, resistance movements better-resourced and more experienced, and eventual Allied victory ever more probable, the population's calculations did increasingly favour the resistance. But such calculations continued until late in the day nonetheless.

Consequently, some resistance movements sought to encourage the population into supporting them, rather than coerce it. This was a common characteristic among resistance movements in Western Europe, in the Czech lands and in Poland. A covert 'secret army' approach to resistance employed the kinds of actions that were less likely to provoke fearsome Axis retaliation. Such resistance movements favoured this approach partly because they feared that particularly ferocious retaliation from the occupiers might seriously disrupt the sabotage, intelligence-gathering and other important activities in which they were engaged. Yet it was also because they feared what such ferocity might do to the population in whose name they were ostensibly resisting.<sup>11</sup> This particular fear developed partly because such movements stood for constitutionalist forms of government, and contained few extremely ruthless elements among their number. Moreover, because the countries in which they were operating were relatively small, they were more likely to interact with civilian communities with whom they felt a measure of common local or regional identity.

Soviet partisans, in particular, very often presented a considerably different picture. As the instruments of a ruthless regime, they were far from averse to brutally coercing the population into aiding them. They operated in large areas often very far from their own regions of origin, amid communities with whom

they felt no particular affinity. Their callous, sometimes murderous treatment of civilians also reflected the often chronic state of discipline within their own units.

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The final factor that helped determine the form and effectiveness of the various resistance movements was their relations with one another. At national level, alliances could be formed between hitherto politically or ethnically antagonistic groupings, often harbouring very different visions for the post-war future of their country. Some such groupings could be backed at different times by the Western Allies, some by the Soviet Union, some by both, and some by neither. Some of the alliances that resulted endured for the duration of the war; such an alliance was laudably achieved by the French resistance. More often, however, such alliances were fractious at best and liable to collapse into brutal civil conflict. Resistance groups animated by intense mutual loathing generated a murderous state of affairs in Greece, Yugoslavia and the Ukraine. In situations such as these, the danger to civilians not just from their occupiers, but from their own country-men also, was clear.

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In providing a new, updated synthesis of the resistance movements of occupied Europe, and by illuminating how the resistance was shaped by all these aforementioned forces, this book seeks to provide readers with an analysis that neither eulogises nor condemns the movements. Much of the anglophone scholarship of earlier post-war decades was concerned with the crucial but necessarily somewhat narrow question of how far partisan movements contributed to eventual Allied victory.<sup>12</sup> But since the 1980s in particular, the focus of many studies has shifted to the occupied countries themselves. Many such studies have concerned themselves with explaining how and why the population as a whole responded to occupation – whether that response was to resist, collaborate or seek simply to reach some sort of tolerable accommodation with the new regime. Such studies, particularly those emanating from the countries that were once occupied, have often been affected by the fierce emotion and the social, cultural and political controversies that debates on resistance often still generate.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, some of the historians whose work is presented in this book themselves hold different positions, albeit positions based firmly upon scholarly expertise, on some of the controversies that this topic encompasses.

Such was the complexity and diversity of the forces that shaped the European resistance during the Second World War, the multiplicity of the national, regional and local settings in which its effects were played out, and the on-going controversies that surround it, that the need for further in-depth study of it is clear. It is hoped, however, that this book will provide the reader with a useful and engaging overview of European resistance during the Second World War as scholars understand it at this point in time, nearly seventy years after the conflict's end.

## Notes

1. Santo Peli, *La Resistenza in Italia* (Turin, 2004), p. 13.
2. On the Italian case see Philip Cooke, *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance* (New York, 2011); John Foot, *Italy's divided memory* (New York, 2010). For broader-based studies see M. Evans and K. Lunn, *War and memory in the 20th Century* (Oxford, 1997); M. Macmillan, *The uses and abuses of history* (London, 2009); P. Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945–1965* (Cambridge, 2000).
3. Simone Neri Sereni, 'A Past to be Thrown Away? Politics and History in the Italian Resistance', *Contemporary European History*, 4/3 (November 1995), 367–81.
4. Seumas Milne, 'Greek Myth', *Guardian*, Saturday, 29 July 2000, available online: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2000/jul/29/fiction.features>.
5. Prominent English-language overviews of resistance and occupation include Matthew Cooper, *The Phantom War: The German Struggle against Soviet Partisans 1941–1944* (London, 1979); M.R.D. Foot, *Resistance: An Analysis of European Resistance to Nazism, 1940–1945* (London, 1976); Jørgen Hastrup, *Europe Ablaze: An Analysis of the History of the European Resistance Movements, 1939–45* (Odense, 1978); Tony Judt (ed.), *Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe, 1939–1948* (London, 1989); Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe* (London, 2008); Henry Michel, *The Shadow War: European Resistance, 1939–1945* (New York, 1972); Bob Moore (ed.), *Resistance in Western Europe* (Oxford, 2000); Ben Shepherd and Juliette Pattinson (eds), *War in a Twilight World: Partisan and Anti-partisan Warfare in Eastern Europe, 1939–45* (London, 2010).
6. See for instance Hermann Graml, Hans Mommsen, Hans-Joachim Reichardt and Ernst Wolf, *The German Resistance to Hitler* (London, 1966); Theodore S. Hamerow, *On the Road to the Wolf's Lair: German Resistance to Hitler* (London, 1997); Hans Mommsen, *Germans Against Hitler* (London, 2008); Ian Kershaw, *Lack of the Devil: the Story of Operation Valhalla* (London, 2009).
7. See Chapter 4 on France in this volume. The *maquis* (directly translated as scrubland) were French guerrilla bands, initially composed of men who had escaped into remote hilly and mountainous areas to escape the labour draft to Germany.
8. H. Michel, *Les Mouvements Clandestins en Europe* (Vendôme, 1961), pp. 11–16.
9. For a comprehensive overview of German-occupied Europe and accompanying bibliography, see Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*.
10. See for instance G.H. Lovett, *Napoleon and the Birth of Modern Spain* (New York, 1965), p. 693; C.J. Esdalle, *Fighting Napoleon* (New Haven, Conn., 2004).
11. Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, p. 473.
12. See especially Foot, *Resistance*; David Stafford, *Britain and the European Resistance, 1940–1945* (London, 1980).
13. For relevant historiography concerning occupation and partisan warfare within the individual countries, see relevant individual chapters in this volume.

## THE EUROPEAN WAR 1939-45

1939	
Sept 1	German invasion of Poland.
Sept 17	Soviet resistance of Poland.
Sept 27	Polish resistance comes to an end.
Nov 30	Soviet attack on Finland.
1940	
Mar 12	Finnish make peace with USSR.
Apr	British and French mine Norwegian waters to hinder German shipping.
Apr 9	Germans invade Norway and Denmark.
May 10	German invasion of Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg.
May 14	Dutch army lays down arms.
May 26	Belgian forces ordered to capitulate.
May 28-	Evacuation of bulk of British forces and 140,000 French from Dunkirk.
June 4	Allied forces withdraw from Norway.
June 3-7	Italy declares war on France and Britain.
June 10	French armistice with Germany (and June 24 with Italy).
June 22	End of French Third Republic and formal initiation of new regime at Vichy.
July 9	Battle of Britain.
Aug 8-	
Oct 10	German troops enter Romania.
Oct 8	Italian attack on Greece from Albania.
Oct 28	Hungary and Romania join German-Italian-Japanese pact.
Nov	
1941	
March	Bulgaria joins Axis.
Apr 6	German invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece.
Apr 17	Yugoslav capitulation.
Apr 23	Greek armistice with Germans; British forces withdrawn.
May 20	Successful German airborne attack on Crete begins.
June 22	German invasion of USSR. By the end of October German forces have occupied Odessa and Kharkov, entered the Crimea, and are on the outskirts of Moscow.
1942	
July 2	Opening of German summer offensive - capture of Sevastopol and advance into northern Caucasus.
Oct 25	Start of battle of El Alamein.
Nov 8	Anglo-American landings in North Africa provoke occupation of Vichy, France by Germans and scuttling of French fleet at Toulon.

## THE EUROPEAN WAR 1939-45 (CONT.)

Nov 19	At furthest extent of German success, Russian counter-offensive begins.
1943	
Jan	Russians raise siege of Leningrad.
Feb 2	German surrender at Stalingrad.
March	German spring offensive begins.
July	Soviet summer offensive opens.
July 10	Allied landings in Sicily.
Sept 3	Allied invasion of Italy and armistice with new Italian government.
Nov 6	Russian recapture of Kiev.
Dec 31	Russian recapture of Zhitomir.
1944	
Feb	Soviet forces enter former Estonia.
March	Crimea retaken by Soviet forces.
June 4	Anglo-American forces enter Rome.
June 6	Anglo-American landings in Normandy open the invasion of northern Europe.
August	Soviet forces enter Poland, Romania and East Prussia.
Aug 15	Allied landings in south of France.
Aug 24	Surrender of Romanian government.
Sept 2	Liberation of Brussels.
Sept 12	American forces enter German territory near Eupen.
Sept 25	USSR declares war on Bulgaria: surrender three days later.
Oct 20	Russians enter Belgrade.
Dec 16-25	German counter-offensive in France defeated.
1945	
Jan-Apr	Battle of Germany.
Jan 17	Soviet forces take Warsaw.
Feb 7	Yalta Conference.
Feb 13	Final Russian mastery of Budapest.
Feb 20	Russians near Berlin.
Mar 7	Allied forces cross the Rhine.
Apr 20	Russians enter Berlin.
Apr 25	US/USSR forces meet on the Elbe.
Apr 28	German forces in Italy surrender.
May 1	Death of Hitler announced.
May 7	German surrender.
May 8	VE day - the end of the war in Europe.
June 5	Allied Control Commission takes control of German territory as of 31 December 1937.

