CHAPTER II

EXTERMINATION BY OVERCROWDING

Territorial Amputations

Germany's living space, even in 1937, was small for her heavy population and afforded important natural resources only in the form of farm lands and deposits of coal and potash. Her agricultural lands have been overworked by intensive cultivation for 1,000 to 2,000 years and her soil has been starved for fertilizer during and since the recent war. Even when plenty of fertilizer was available and her territory was intact, Germany was never able to produce more than 80 per cent of the food and other farm products needed to meet her domestic needs.[1] The rest had to be imported in exchange for coal and manufactured exports.

As her agricultural lands became overcrowded, Germany had resorted to manufacturing. By importing iron ore and exploiting her coal and potash resources to the utmost, she had built up the world's second largest steel and chemical industries which, in turn, formed the "workshop of Europe," raised the general European standard of living, and provided direct or indirect support for fully two-thirds of her own population.

On account of destruction by total warfare and deliberate Allied policy, these industrial resources are now largely wiped out. Without them, over half of the German workers must resort to the soil as their only other means of life. Under the circumstances it is extremely doubtful that the land, even if all held in 1937 were left intact, could support the huge, now jobless, industrial population on even the barest subsistence level.

Without waiting to see, Germany's conquerors have ruthlessly stripped her of lands constituting 28 per cent of her living space, producing an even higher proportion of her food, and containing two of her three principal coal regions. To make matters still worse, they are expelling into the remain-

ing Reich millions of Germans from the lost provinces, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere; are coddling a large population of "displaced persons" within stricken Germany; and, in the case of the Russians and French, are maintaining large armies of occupation which live off the land. Both the "displaced persons" and these occupation forces enjoy priority over the Germans by being able to make requisitions against them for whatever food and other items they need in order to live in comparative ease and luxury. The deplorable situation created by these actions can well be imagined.

The Atlantic Charter had promised:

> "No aggrandizement." "No territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned." "The right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they live." "To all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own borders." "A peace . . . which will afford assurance that all men in all lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want."

In their Yalta statement, the Big Three reaffirm their "faith in the principles of the Atlantic Charter" and say they uphold "the right of all people to choose the form of government under which they live." Yet in the same pronouncement they grant Russia the eastern half of Poland and as compensation promise the Poles "substantial accessions of territory" in eastern Germany—all without regard to "the wishes of the peoples concerned," "freely expressed" or otherwise.

Although Yalta prescribes that the exact amount of such territory Poland is to receive must await final adjudication at the peace conference, Russia at Potsdam confronted her two western allies with a territorial *fait accompli*. She had taken a third of East Prussia as her own permanent acquisition and had placed her Polish puppet in possession of all other German territory east of the Oder and Neisse Rivers. Even the drastic Morgenthau Plan had called for ceding Poland only the part of East Prussia not taken by Russia and the Upper Silesian coal and industrial region. But in addition to these areas, Poland had now possessed herself of German Posen, nearly all of Pomerania and Lower Silesia, and the eastern part of Brandenburg—the best part of the Reich's breadbasket. In urging her two allies to accept these acquisitions as permanent, Russia

argued that so many German inhabitants had fled when the Red armies invaded that to get the regions back into production would require their incorporation into the Russian and Polish economies along the lines already drawn. [2]

Russia's seizure of Koenigsberg and adjacent East Prussian territory was accepted at Potsdam and has since gone unopposed. Renamed Kaliningrad, the former East Prussian capital has been developed into a prized warm water port for the Soviet Union, most of the German inhabitants have been ousted, and the whole region has been thoroughly Russified. [3]

But concerning German lands held by Poland, Potsdam decides that "the final delimitation of the western frontier of Poland should await the peace settlement"; however, it permits the territories to be held meanwhile "under the administration of the Polish state." Apparently looking upon this arrangement as tantamount to *de facto* recognition of her title to the regions, Poland has proceeded to dispossess and drive out the millions of German inhabitants, and to replace them with Poles.

Although Moscow had led Poland to believe that she could keep the German provinces in question, German Communists with Soviet backing early in 1946 started hinting to the Germans that all or part of the lands might be returned and Poland herself partitioned again between Russia and Germany, if the Reich would accept communization and membership in the Soviet Union. Marshall Zhukov himself had made such a suggestion to German Communists in April and in July Molotov at Paris had lent his tacit support when, to the consternation of his western allies, he came out boldly for a territorially unified, centralized, strong Reich. He specifically opposed any territorial amputations in the west and although silent on the subject, permitted the inference that some or all of the eastern territories might be returned. The coup came as a discomforting surprise especially to France and the United States whose "tough peace" programs which they had assumed met with hearty Russian approval called for severe amputations of the Reich. It became plain that Russia approved the programs only as long as her western friends would put them forward and thereby permanently alienate the German people.

Finally realizing that we must meet the Russian bid for

German sympathy and support, Mr. Byrnes at Stuttgart made it plain to the Germans that, while the United States will continue to support Poland's claim to some German territory, it does not necessarily consider the western Polish frontier to be permanently fixed at the Oder River. His object was clearly to place the United States in a position to match any offer the Russians might make to return to the Germans all or part of their lost eastern territory. Communist inspired Polish reaction to the Byrnes statement was immediate and bitter. The day after it was given crowds with clenched fists waving milled about in front of the Warsaw residence of the American Ambassador shouting, "Down with the defenders of Germany!" A spokesman of the Polish puppet government publicly warned that Poland "will fight" if any attempt is made to move her western frontier east of the Oder. A little later Stalin declared that he considers Poland's present frontiers permanent. With the situation thus stalemated awaiting the peace settlment, Poland remains in what may easily become permanent possession of the disputed areas.

France, meanwhile, had waged a bitter fight to deprive Germany of vital western areas. Insisting that the Reich must be permanently weakened by economic and political dismemberment, she demanded that the Ruhr be detached and internationalized, that the Rhineland be turned into an autonomous state, and that she be allowed to annex the rich Saar coal and industrial region. Placing settlement of these questions and her exorbitant reparation claims above all bilateral agreements and alliances, she attempted to force the issue by blocking all Allied attempts to treat Germany as an economic whole.

Prior to the Molotov coup at Paris, France had been supported in her territorial claims against Germany by French Communists with Moscow backing. But just as she was making her strongest appeal for Allied approval of her severe plans for western Germany, Molotov suddenly abandoned her and made his unexpected bid for German territorial unity and support. Rejecting outright the proposed internationalization of the Ruhr and, by implication, French annexation of the Saar, he quoted from Stalin's speech of November 2, 1942, in which he had said that it is "just as impossible to destroy Germany as to destroy Russia." Opposing any "alamode" plans to dis-

member or pastoralize the Reich, or to turn it into a federation or confederation of small states, as had been proposed, he demanded four-power control and administration of the Ruhr.

Despite this stinging Russian rejection of territorial changes in western Germany, the United States, in exchange for a French promise to cease blocking treatment of Germany as an economic whole, promised to back French claims to the Saar which France thereupon began to enlarge by annexating adjoining areas. But at Stuttgart, Mr. Byrnes, after repeating the promise to support the French claim to the Saar, followed Mr. Molotov's example and opposed detachment of the Ruhr and Rhineland. His stand, supported by both Russia and Britain, will undoubtedly force substantial moderation in future French claims.

Byrnes declared that apart from the Saar and the eastern territories to go to Russia and to Poland as decided at the peace conference, "the United States will not support any encroachment on territory which is indisputably German or any division of Germany which is not genuinely desired by the people concerned. So far as the United States is aware the people of the Ruhr and the Rhineland desire to remain united with the rest of Germany. And the United States will not oppose their desire."

With the exceptions noted, Mr. Byrnes, here with telling effect, applied to Germany the principles of the Atlantic Charter. *There should be no exceptions.* If these principles apply to the Ruhr and Rhineland, as they do, they apply with equal force to the Saar and to German territories east of the Oder-Neisse line. Such principles cannot be used merely as convenient trumps in the sordid game of power politics without convincing the world, including the Germans, that our stand is unprincipled, inherently contradictory, and prejudiced, that in consequence they are being unjustly deprived of territory vital to their very existence.

The Germans have long suffered from acute overpopulation. In earlier years they sought relief in colonies and heavy emigration, which incidentally brought us the large German element in our own population. Later, they resorted to intensive industrialization. After World War I, they were stripped of their colonies, emigration was impeded by barriers such as

immigration quotas, and their homeland was reduced from 208,830 to 181,699 square miles. Following World War II, emigration has been entirely prohibited, and all the Germans in Europe are being jammed into a homeland further slashed to only 133,000 square miles.

Although Germany's population is half as large as our own, her territory in 1937 was only one-sixteenth as large as ours, or about equal to the combined areas of Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Since the present losses to Poland, Russia, and France subtract an area as large as Pennsylvania, they mean that the 70 million Germans are being crammed into a territory no larger than Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio.

Imagine trying to force half the people of the United States into these three states with their cities, factories, railways, and other production facilities demolished!

The resultant population compression is tremendous. Thinking people in France are justly worried that it will bring another violation of their territory impelled by millions of desperate Germans faced by extermination through overcrowding.

Diplomacy which creates such powder kegs is singularly lacking in statesmanship and humanity. It makes sense only in terms of Soviet designs.

Mass Expulsions of Outside Germans into the Shrunken Reich

The forced exodus of Germans from the lost German territories and elsewhere in eastern Europe constitutes one of the blackest pages of history.

Potsdam gives its permission by saying that the "transfer to Germany of German populations, or elements thereof, remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, will have to be undertaken." However, it adds that "any transfers that take place should be effected in an orderly and humane manner."

Some 15 million people are victimized by this decree: a half million from Hungary, nearly three million from Czechoslovakia, and most of the rest from the German territories taken by Russia and Poland.

Potsdam calls for annulment of all Nazi laws which estab-

lished discrimination on grounds of race and declares: "No such discrimination, whether legal, administrative or otherwise, shall be tolerated." Yet these forced migrations of German populations are predicated squarely on rank racial discrimination. The people affected are mostly wives and children of simple peasants, workers, and artisans whose families have lived for centuries in the homes from which they have now been ejected, and whose only offense is their German blood. How "orderly and humane" their banishment has been is now a matter of record.

Winston Churchill was not exaggerating when, in referring to the expulsions some three months after V-E Day, he informed the House of Commons:

> "It isn't impossible a tragedy on a prodigious scale is imposing itself behind the iron curtain which presently divides Europe." [4]

The conservative news letter, REVIEW OF WORLD AFFAIRS, quotes as follows from a confidential memorandum prepared by an eminent European economist:

> "Since the end of the war about 3,000,000 people, mostly women and children and overaged men, have been killed in eastern Germany and south-eastern Europe; about 15,000,000 people have been deported or had to flee from their homesteads and are on the road. About 25 per cent of these people, over 3,000,000, have perished. About 4,000,000 men and women have been deported to eastern Europe and Russia as slaves. . . . It seems that the elimination of the German population of eastern Europe—at least 15,000,000 people—was planned in accordance with decisions made at Yalta. Churchill had said to Mikolakczyk when the latter protested during the negotiations at Moscow against forcing Poland to incorporate eastern Germany: 'Don't mind the five or more million Germans. Stalin will see to them. You will have no trouble with them: they will cease to exist.' " [5]

Dr. Lawrence Meyer, executive secretary of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, after a tour of Germany stated:

> "About 16,000,000 German refugees east of the Oder are being deported from their homes. It has been estimated that already 10,000,000 have been driven out. The human tragedy and suffering caused by this 'Volkswanderung' are unparalleled in history. Hunger, cold, sickness, and death is the lot of millions. An authentic eye-witness report of the physical wretchedness of most of the refugees is pictured in the following:
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> "A large barge is slowly being towed across the Oder River. In it, lying on straw, are 300 children ranging from 2 to 14 years

of age. There is hardly a sign of life in the whole group. Their hollow eyes, their swollen bellies, knees, and feet are telltale signs of starvation. These are merely the vanguard of hundreds of thousands—millions of homeless, shattered, hungry, sick, helpless, hopeless human beings fleeing westward—west of the Oder and Neisse Rivers.

"A trust in God—in His goodness and mercy—these are the only hope of Germany today. And thank God in many there is still faith in God against which the gates of hell have stormed in vain during the past decade."

In describing the expulsions in Poland and Czechoslovakia, Russian officers told Chicago Daily News Correspondents:

"The Poles have cleaned out all the Germans as far west as the Oder River, and now all that property is for any Poles who want it."

"The Czechs have taken care of the Germans in Sudetenland in their own way—and it's not pretty. They round them up, with only what they can carry, and start them moving."

Upon returning to his post as professor of political science at the University of Michigan, after serving 14 months as director of AMG's regional government coordinating office, Dr. James K. Pollock, in August, 1946, said most of the 2¼ million expellees from Hungary and Sudetenland are old women and children. He said:

"The Germans we are getting are mostly from the Sudetenland or Germans whose families had been living in Hungary for some 500 years. They come in perfectly frightful condition. They even took the women's wedding rings before they left. In many cases they have no clothes except those they are wearing."

An officer would call at the door of the victims and order them to leave their home within a few hours, permitting them to take along 30 to 100 lb. of luggage containing nothing of value which might help them in making a new start elsewhere. The property forcibly left behind would be confiscated by the state. Any able-bodied men found would be hustled off to slavery. The others would then start their perilous hegira to over-crowded Germany wholly without protection of law, subjected to every conceivable abuse, including robbery, beatings, rape and murder.

A dispatch in December, 1945, paints a picture of the plight of the exiles in the new Poland, where hundreds of thousands had been ousted from their homes and left to wan-

der where they would. Former German cities like Breslau are described as almost depopulated of Germans, with Poles taking their place. The dispatch goes on to say:

"Hundreds of thousands of persons in Poland are constantly on the move, restlessly seeking a spot where they can grub a living out of the war ravaged land. In every rail station and junction men, women, and children await transport. Clusters of human beings, almost hidden under loads of parcels and cans and other remnants of what must have been their homes, wait along the roads or in blasted villages for any transport that will carry them somewhere else. Life with its birth and death continues even in these nomadic streams and everywhere you see womenfolk tending their sick or nursing babies." •

An eye-witness report of the arrival in Berlin of a train which had left Poland with exactly 1,000 refugees aboard reads:

"Nine hundred and nine men, women, and children dragged themselves and their luggage from a Russian railway train at Leherte station today, after 11 days travelling in boxcars from Poland.

"Red Army soldiers lifted 91 corpses from the train, while relatives shrieked and sobbed as their bodies were piled in American lend-lease trucks and driven off for interment in a pit near a concentration camp."

"The refugee train was like a macabre Noah's ark. Every car was jammed with Germans. . . . The families carry all their earthly belongings in sacks, bags, and tin trunks. . . . Nursing infants suffer the most, as their mothers are unable to feed them, and frequently go insane as they watch their offspring slowly die before their eyes. Today four screaming, violently insane mothers were bound with rope to prevent them from clawing other passengers.

" 'Many women try to carry off their dead babies with them,' a Russian railway official said. 'We search the bundles whenever we discover a weeping woman, to make sure she is not carrying an infant corpse with her.' " •

New York Daily News Correspondent Donald Mackenzie likewise reports from Berlin:

"In the windswept courtyard of the Stettiner Bahnhof, a cohort of German refugees, part of 12,000,000 to 19,000,000 dispossessed in East Prussia and Silesia, sat in groups under a driving rain and told the story of their miserable pilgrimage, during which more than 25 per cent died by the roadside and the remainder were so starved they scarcely had strength to walk.

"Filthy, emaciated, and carrying their few remaining possessions wrapped in bits of cloth, they shrank away crouching when one approached them in the railway terminal, expecting to be beaten or robbed or worse. That is what they have become accustomed to expect.

"A nurse from Stettin, a young, good-looking blond, told how her father had been stabbed to death by Russian soldiers who, after raping her mother and sister, tried to break into her own room. She escaped and hid in a haystack with four other women for 4 days . . .

"On the train to Berlin she was pillaged once by Russian troops and twice by Poles. . . . Women who resisted were shot dead, she said, and on one occasion she saw a guard take an infant by the legs and crush its skull against a post because the child cried while the guard was raping its mother."

"An old peasant from Silesia said . . . victims were robbed of everything they had, even their shoes. Infants were robbed of their swaddling clothes so that they froze to death. All the healthy girls and women, even those 65 years of age were raped in the train and then robbed, the peasant said." [10]

Precedent for these inhuman expulsions was set long before Potsdam in Romania where, according to a diplomatic report from Bucharest, 520,000 Romanian citizens of German ancestry, men between the ages of 17 and 45 and women between 18 and 30, were rounded up like slaves and deported to Soviet Russia. The document said "there were heart-rending scenes and many preferred suicide to an unknown fate in Soviet Russia." [11]

The United States had made its own direct contribution by ousting more than 16,000 people of German extraction from Latin American countries, obtaining permission to do so by pressures of various kinds applied from Washington, extraditing them without trial to this country, holding them here in concentration camps incommunicado and still without trial, and finally deporting them out of this hemisphere where many of them have been impressed into slavery by England and France. [12]

These wholesale expulsions of native populations are as reprehensible as anything the Nazis are accused of doing, and have caused deep resentment among all classes of Germans. Had America kept her skirts clear, and especially if she had denounced them, as she should have done, German respect for

us would have soared. As matters stand, Germans blame us almost as much as the Russians and Poles. Our hands, too, are stained with the blood of millions of innocent victims of this savage, thoroughly un-American program.

Apart from the moral aspects of the matter, the dumping of all these millions of expropriated, helpless people into what remains of wrecked Germany piles chaos upon chaos and helps convert the entire German nation into one vast Belsen or Buchenwald.