

**Nick Baron and Peter Gatrell, eds., *Homelands: War, Population and Statehood in Eastern Europe and Russia, 1918-1924*, Anthem Press: London: 2004, xiii, 267 p., ISBN 1843311208 (cloth) and Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron, eds., *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-50*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan: 2009, xv, 276 p., ISBN: 023057601X (hbk.)**

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If one describes the twentieth century as the era of continuum of wars, it is also the century that people moved, migrated and were displaced because of successive wars and post-war reconstruction and resettlement. The experience of wars and post-war turmoil and how the experiences were represented in various media have attained substantial scholarly attention to date. All the same, its focus has been primarily on those who experienced war either on the battlefield or on the home front.

The two books under review attempt to draw our attention to a hitherto neglected aspect of the two World Wars and post-War reconstruction: how the population dispersed by World Wars I and II and post-War upheavals experienced their “displacement” and resettlement. They thus make invaluable contributions to our understanding of the impact of the two World Wars on broader political, social and cultural circumstances.

As contributors to *EBR* have suggested, crossing national and/or regional borders does not merely mean a physical relocation from one place to another. It often involves hardships and other various kinds of dilemma, all of which endanger one’s sense of affiliation, belonging and identity. Some cross a border with hope for a new life while others leave their “homelands” with huge despair. It may be followed by an uneasiness to settle into a new life as well as nostalgia for the land they left.

During and after World Wars I and II, many were displaced and dispersed. They had to undergo experiencing, representing and remembering the displacement in an acute and sensitive way. Through these experiences, displaced people were forced not only to rethink their affiliation (such as citizenship and nationality) but also to ascribe to a new (and sometimes awkward) identity.

The books pay no less significant attention to experiences of those who were not physically displaced by the two World Wars. They remained in their homeland but they were all the same displaced as their affiliation and social identities became remarkably uncertain after the upheavals.

The editors, Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron produced two excellent books which shed light on the experiences of displaced people, their representation, and the way in which they were

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incorporated in society undertaking state-building and post-war reconstruction and resettlement. They are the products of two big research projects funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. In the conclusion of the first volume, the editors describe the over-arching theme of the projects as investigating “the nexus of population displacement, state building and social identity” (*Homeland*, p. 201). The two books materialize the editors’ hope to set a pioneering study of history of the population displacement in the first half of the twentieth century in excellent form.

*Homelands: War, Population and Statehood in Eastern Europe and Russia 1918-1924* examines the wave of population displacement at the end of and the immediate aftermath of World War I in the former Russian Empire, including Poland (chapters 5, 6 and 7), Lithuania (chapter 4), Latvia (chapter 2), some regions of Soviet Russia (chapters 1 and 8), Belorussia (chapter 3) and Armenia (chapter 9). Each chapter provides a well-researched case study on the way in which the displaced people, refugees and returnees experienced relocation and how the experiences had an impact upon nation-building and the nationalization of the citizens. The authors draw on appropriate archival and published materials and provide insightful and original arguments.

In the introduction, Baron and Gatrell invite our attentiveness to an “itinerant perspective” by which we can overcome the dominant “sedentary” means of examination. This is because World War I not only dispersed people and made them “on the move” but also affected the way of seeing and self-recognition even for those who remained physically “un-displaced.” At the same time, the government of each nation should have re-registered its population and re-drawn the boundaries between who were us and who were not.

As Peter Gatrell’s earlier monograph shows us, the population within the Russian Empire was on the move on an enormous scale already during World War I (*A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). It gathered further momentum during post-war resettlement and following the Russian Revolution of 1917. *Homelands* offers a sweeping investigation into post-war Eastern European nations and Soviet Russia. Its focus also extends to the people travelling across Eurasia. Lucja Kapralska examines the returnees from Siberia and Manchuria to the newly independent Poland (chapter 7). Among other excellent chapters, this one is worthy of particular note. It highlights the difficulty of adjustment to one’s “imagined” homeland. For various reasons, Poles moved to Siberia and Manchuria by 1918. For them, independent Poland established in 1918 was a promised homeland to where many wanted to return. However, Kapralska shows us some returnees to Poland found their new place not very pleasant or comfortable. Not only did it fill them with a sense of nostalgia for Siberian nature but some actually did return to Siberia (p. 152). Konrad Zielinski (chapter 5) also deals with independent Poland with the focus on the way in which “nationalization” was conducted by the new government. In the immediate aftermath of the war, a large number of immigrants (Poles, Russians, Ukrainians and so on) sought to settle in Poland and to acquire citizenship of the new state. Poles who had previously lived in Russia were allowed to cross the border with relative ease, although some of them were put under surveillance. On the other hand, the Jews, Ukrainians and Russians had severe restrictions that made it difficult for them to settle in. Unless they had a right to hold citizenship or they could guarantee financial support, non-Polish border-crossers were subject to deportation.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union experienced a further swell of population displacement after collectivization in the Soviet Union, Nazi occupation and deportation, and the forced migration of ethnic minorities. All these remained resolved until after the breakout of the World War II. Moreover, the “cartographic carnival” (*Warlands*, p. 3) was carried out by the Allies after the war and at the beginning of the Cold War. The post-Second World War resettlement took place under such elusive circumstances. *Warlands: Population Displacement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-1950* addresses many questions overlapping with *Homelands*. However, the interplay between the experiences of displaced people and their representation is more extensively scrutinized. Also, *Warlands* argues the issue of “power” and “space” much more extensively by shedding light on the refugees’ experiences at the camp. Some chapters thus examine the way in which the state intervened in the movement of the population as a means of post-war state and social reconstruction.

Nick Baron’s chapter (chapter 5) shows us how Soviet officials adopted filtration in order to count, register and control returnees from Nazi occupation camps. Baron argues that although filtration was by no means a new way of governing it constituted an important part of the reconstituting the Soviet Union itself after the War. Baron aptly adopts Michel Foucault’s idea of governmentality in order to highlight the complex mechanism of “power” at the camps and the practices of border control. Filtration not only re-registered the population but also helped instill the way in which Soviet citizens were expected to behave in the post-war Stalinist state into those who returned or were forced to return (p. 102). Although Siobhan Peeling does not directly refer to Foucault, her examination on post-war Leningrad (chapter 6) highlights similar means of incorporating newcomers into the city. Those who wanted to dwell in Leningrad were expected to become “cultured citizens” with consciousness of cleanliness and hygiene. By filtration and investigation of newcomers, Soviet officials exercised their power to demarcate the “eligibility” of becoming a Soviet citizen in new social-cultural terms.

The other important issue with which *Warlands* is fully engaged is the memory of being “displaced.” Kateryana Stadnik describes the hardship and difficulty the population transferred between Ukraine and Poland encountered when they returned to their “homeland” (chapter 8). Discord between the returnees and the host society was widespread and, in some case, the returnees aroused resentment from the host community. One Ukrainian said that “In Ternopil where I was moved from Poland I had no home” (p. 182). Stadnik also describes the deeper implications of immigration. She tells us that there remains a stronger negative attitude towards migration and newcomers in Poland and Ukraine than in any other countries surveyed (pp. 182-183). As Stadnik argues, the profound repercussions of the population resettlement in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during the post-Second World War years are still felt in the region.

As the books set out to be a pioneering study of the history of population displacement, it would have been beneficial if lists of general and further readings were provided at the end of each book. Although maps are provided at the beginning, more detailed maps relating to the region each chapter addresses could have been inserted. Notwithstanding these minor negatives, Gatrell and Baron establish a sound basis for the study of population displacement. These two books under

review are valuable sources and required reading for scholars who seek to examine wartime and post-war experiences of the population. These books will soon find their places in the reading list for students studying the history of the twentieth century and of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Not only that, they are also immensely useful for students in contemporary politics, sociology as well as border studies.